

**HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
OF
IMAM HUSAIN'S
MARTYRDOM**

BY
MOHAMMAD ALI AL-HAJ SALMIN,
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE HOLY PROPHET MOHAMMAD :
Through Different Lights.

MOHAMMAD : The Commander of the Faithful

* * *

ALI : The Caliph.

* * *

FATIMAH : The Lady of the Light.

**IMAM HASAN : The Chief of the Youth of
Paradise.**

IMAM HUSAIN : The Greatest World-Martyr.

**HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY OF
IMAM HUSAIN'S MARTYRDOM**

BUDDHA : The Great.

SAYYIDAH ZAINAB.



Mohammad Ali Al-Haj Salmin
-Author, Journalist & Missionary.—

To My

Most Respected Brother-in-Islam
ahibzada Nawab Basalat Jah Bahadur
of Hyderabad - Deccan.

This Book is respectfully Dedicated

for

his great love and profound reverence

for the greatest of World-Martyrs

IMAM HUSAIN.

The Holy Qur'an Says:

“O you who believe! If you help (the cause of) Allah, He will help you and make firm your feet.” (47: 7).

“And (as for) those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will by no means allow their deeds to perish. He will guide them and improve their condition. And cause them to enter the Heaven which He has made known to them.” (47: 4-6).

“And reckon not those who are slain in Allah's way as dead, nay, (they are) alive (and) are provided sustenance from their Lord.” (3: 168).

“Sure Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the Heaven; they fight in Allah's Way, so that they slay and are slain, a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran, and who is more faithful to His covenant than Allah”? (9: 111).

The Holy Prophet Mohammad (Allah's blessings be on him and his descendants) said: “I am leaving amongst you two heavy things, the one is the Book of Allah (Quran) and the other is my progeny.” (Musnad Humbal Vol. 3, Page 14) (Fakhruddin Razi Vol. 4, Page 128 of his Tafseer and Durre Mansoor Vol. II, Page 13).

Tirmizi relates through Anas: “The Prophet was asked as to who was the most beloved of his house and the Prophet replied: “Hasan and Husain.”

PREFACE.

In my book, "Husain: the Greatest World Martyr," I have attempted only an outline sketch of that great personality's life, leading up to his unique sacrifice to save Islam for humanity. His life's message decrees a fuller and deeper treatment. This present work is a humble endeavour of mine in that direction.

Husain's martyrdom stands alone in its unapproached and unapproachable grandeur. History has not recorded another incident that can stand even a tolerable comparison to it. Says Gibbon, the famous historian: "In a distant age and climate, the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader." Verily Husain appeals to humanity at large, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. From Karbala has gone forth the immortal Voice, the Voice of Truth and Unity, unto the distant corners of the world. It will ring and ring through ages.

I place my tiny thing before the public. If it has done its bit to broadcast the Martyr's mighty message, that is ample compensation and consolation for all my troubles,

The Author.

1362. A. H.

1943. A. D.

HUSAIN.

By Husain Wells

Pitched upon the scorching desert
the tents of Husain lay.

Encompassed round with Satan's hounds,
Upon that Black Sad Day.

They numbered less than Eighty Strong,
Women and Children too,

Whilst Yazid's thousands stood around,
Awaiting the Fiend's cue.

Driven away from the cooling stream,
His children wailing for water,

Awaiting with Patience extremely sublime,
Like sheep for the butcher's slaughter.

Oh ! how valiantly fought that pitiful few,
Against Yazid's vile murderers,

Fought with a courage unequalled in Time,
Fought with a fierceness that was surely divine.

The earth quaked and trembled as noon drew near,
But still the survivors knew no fear.

But fewer and fewer grew that pitiful band,
For Islam, and God, and Husain, they stand.

At last, all were dead, the Devil had won,
Blood red sank down the merciless sun.

Trampled and torn lay the gallant Husain,
For Islam, and God, the Faithful were slain.

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Published by Mohammad Ali Al-Haj Salmin, from Mahboob Manzil,
"B," Block, Top Floor, Palton Road, Fort, Bombay, I. (India), and
Printed by Prof. H. S. Gammers at "Presidency Printing Press,"
Ratti House, Gunbow Street, Fort, Bombay

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

The Holy Prophet, Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be ever upon him) having performed successfully his last pilgrimage to Mecca, and having pointed out, to those huge number of pilgrims gathered there, the fundamental principles and practices of Islam, said to them, among other things, that he was leaving behind for them two things, namely, the Book of God and the Ahlul-Bait, his house people or his descendants. He further added thus: "If you follow these, (the Book of God and the Ahlul-Bait) you will never go astray from the right path."

But the people did go astray, and they did not care a bit for the Book of God. The untold sufferings of the purest souls, the Prophet's people, reached the most pathetic climax in the matchless and marvellous martyrdom of Husain, the beloved grandson of the Prophet, with all those dearest and nearest to him. To understand aright the full purport and the deep philosophy underlying this unique martyrdom in the world of religion, it is quite essential, at the very outset to present to the readers a succinct account of the Prophet's life and work, followed by a similar biographical sketch regarding this great martyr. May Allah show us the right path and the right interpretation !

CHAPTER II.

The Prophet and Islam.

The main current of our narration does not permit us to deal in detail about the romantic life and achievements of the great Prophet of Arabia, the greatest Prophet in world's history. But to understand the unparalleled tragic incident that took place at Karbala, to view it in its fullest and clearest aspect, it is quite essential to paint its background. That is what was Arabia before the advent of the Holy Prophet, and how his magic touch metamorphosed the whole place. And even his gigantic efforts were, after his death, threatened with complete annihilation, the inevitable result being the martyrdom of Husain with his whole family. But for Husain's martyrdom, Islam, founded and established by his grandfather, would have been wiped off long ago.

The people of Arabia, before the advent of the Holy Prophet, were mentally and morally as barren as the soil there. Debauchery of the worst type (to keep another man's wife was considered by them as a common and innocent vice), undiluted and wholesale drunkenness, infanticide, frequent feuds and wars - these were the order of the day. And they worshipped all sorts of stone images, and the Kaba contained nearly four hundred idols.

The great Prophet was born amidst such a sickening and sinking atmosphere. But like the lotus amidst mud, he grew up to boyhood and youth with an unsullied character. Nothing could tempt him towards the baser life. He was much grieved to see the sad state of affairs around him, spending most of his time in deep meditation, and thinking about the ways and means to save those countless soulless souls. His unsullied character and his high integrity attracted the attention of a rich and noble lady, Khadija by name. Though she was forty and though he was only twenty-five, she married him. This was a great turning-point in his life.

After this marriage, Muhammad spent most of his time in a lonely cave, called Hira, meditating, until at last the light dawned upon him. The divine Command came to him to spread the worship of the One God, to spread the creed of Islam. His noble wife was his first disciple.

Pages after pages are needed to narrate about the inconceivably inhuman tortures underwent by the first few dauntless followers of the Prophet, who were all ordinary people, slaves and others. Islam was built upon such splendid sacrifices. The situation grew hotter every day. The followers had to emigrate to Abyssinia and other places. At last, the Prophet himself, to save Islam, had to flee from Mecca to Medina. In Medina, severer struggles and trials awaited him. The Meccans did not leave him alone and

safe even there. He had to defend Islam by wars. Many wars took place at Badr, Ohud etc. The worst of it was that the Jews in Medina, quite contrary to their solemn pledge to stand by him, secretly helped the Meccans. But the Prophet and the peerless soldiers of Islam, few in number, came out with flying colours in all the wars fighting as they did against overwhelming numbers. At last, Mecca was subdued without shedding a drop of blood. The Prophet, who was once forced to flee for his life from the city of his birth, entered it triumphantly. Men and women now rushed forward to the Prophet to embrace his faith. What cannot be done with endurance and will power? From the very beginning he had that unflinching faith in his mission, and finally his great mission was thus crowned with a success so grand and complete. The whole of Arabia was now at the feet of the Prophet, and Islam's mission spread beyond Arabia's borders to distant places. The great Prophet breathed his last having seen with his own eyes how his untiring efforts were ultimately crowned with that merited success.

Purity, integrity, dignity, and solemnity marked his youth. Robust optimism and undaunted faith in his mission carried him from one success to another, never caring for failures, trials, and wars. To read the life and career of his great personality is to know and understand what amount of tremendous moral strength lay behind him. Anybody else in his place would have never achieved even a bit of his glorious achievement.

He was perfect and was an ideal in all aspects of life—Prophet, Commander, King, Reformer, Law-giver, Householder, etc. Hence, he was able to give to the world a perfect book of religion, the Koran. As revealed by God, he became the world teacher, this fact showing clearly the true divinity of the Koran. In this great Book is reflected the far-seeing nature of the Holy Prophet—those political, social, and moral laws, truly practical and highly ideal. Islam established the worship of the One God, recognised the brotherhood and equality of mankind, and abolished slavery, debauchery, drunkenness, gambling, and other social evils. The magic touch of a matchless personality brought round a hopeless set of people to the worship of the One God.

"God is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind. They will enter the Blissful Abode who have a true, pure, and merciful heart. He who is not kind to God's creatures, and to his own children, God will not be kind to him."

—Mohammad.

"He who careth for the orphan shall be at one with Me on the day of requitals."

—Mohammad.

"Look after the widowed women."

—Mohammad.

"Help the needy."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER III.

Husain, The Most Beloved of the Prophet.

Husain, the central figure in our treatise, the hero of Karbala, the beloved grandson of the Holy Prophet and the precious offspring of Fatima (the virtuous and beloved daughter of the Prophet) and Ali, was born on the 5th of Shaaban, the eighth Arabic month, of the 4th year Hijra. He was younger than his elder brother Hasan, by only a year and a few days. At his birth, the Prophet said the prayers unto his tiny ears, and on the 7th day took place the most celebrated ceremony of shaving the sacred child's head. It is related that Imam Hasan resembled the Prophet from head to breast and Imam Husain resembled from breast to toe. Husain's only diet in his infancy was his mother's milk. He used to suck the Prophet's tongue or thumb.

Boundless and touching was the Prophet's love for his grandchildren, Hasan and Husain. Standing over the pulpit of his mosque, the Prophet was one day delivering his Friday sermon. As the sermon was going on, the two grand-children, Hasan and Husain, came in red clothes. The tender ones were not able to ascend the steps which led to the mosque proper, and it was feared that they would fall down.

Noticing their difficulty, the Prophet at once descended from the pulpit and carried them up himself. Having seated them beside him, he expressed thus: "Verily, what Allah says is true, that our children and our belongings are a great test for us. When I saw my children on the verge of falling over the ground, I grew at once impatient until I suspended my preachings and carried them hither." See how his affection for his grandchildren reached a supreme sublimity and divinity, even solemn spiritual affairs giving way to it.

Anas, a companion of the Prophet says that once somebody asked the Prophet as to who was the most beloved of him among his family and children. The ready reply was that he loved Hasan and Husain most. The Prophet sometime would ask Fatima to bring "his sons," and when the two children were brought to him he would smell and kiss their lips, and hug them to his breast with great love. It is reported to have been said by the Prophet that his body was a garden, and that Hasan and Husain were two flowers in it.

One day the two children came running to their grandfather and with the one in his lap and the other under his armpit he spoke: "I love them, O God and wish Thy love for them and for those who love them."

On another occasion, the Prophet of God had seated Husain on his right thigh, and Abraham,

his own son, on the left, when Gabriel appearing before the Prophet stated that Allah would not keep the two together, and that one of the two He will soon reclaim. So, the Prophet was given the choice of having either of the two. And strange enough, soon after the Prophet's choice for Husain, Ebrahim passed away, and the Prophet used to say that Husain was the treasure left at the cost of his own dear son.

It is said that one day the Prophet went from the house of Ayesha, his wife, to the house of Fatima, his most beloved daughter and there he heard the tearful cries of Husain. On this, he said to Fatima in grief: "Do you know I feel much injured at the cries of Husain"?

The Prophet has said: "God! I love Husain. Thou shalt love him too."

These diverse instances are enough to point out what a beloved and precious product of Islam was sacrificed to uphold virtue and righteousness against the darkest and devilish forces. His peerless character and attainment about which we shall deal in detail in the next chapter, will further intensify and glorify his martyrdom, and the inevitable conclusion is, that Husain has rightly earned for himself and Islam an immortal fame and name.

We have seen how the Prophet was mentally tortured at the sight of the child, Husain, weeping, and how most tormented would his soul have felt

at the merciless slaughter of his beloved grandson at Karbala. But who can avoid Divine dispensation, not even Husain, the flower of mankind? Allah's Will be done.

"I leave two heavy things amongst you: the Book of God and my progeny. If you do hold them fast you will never go astray."

—Mohammad.

"Hasan and Husain are the chiefs of the youth of Paradise."

—Mohammad.

"My intercession, on the day of judgment, will be for those who love my 'Ahlul-Bait,' i.e., the people of the House of the Holy Prophet, his descendants."

—Mohammad.

"My 'Ahlul-Bait' resembles the Noah's ark: he who embarked on it became safe; and he, who turned off, perished."

—Mohammad.

"Husain is of me, and I am of Husain."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER IV.

Husain's Character and Attainments.

Husain was not taught in any school, nor was he placed under any teacher. Any sort of regular teaching system was something absent in those days in Arabia and noble families like the Hashimites considered learning as something derogatory. The Prophet himself was unschooled and untaught, and he became the teacher for the whole humanity, the most ardent champion of learning and knowledge. Similar was the case with his Ah-Lul-Bait or progeny. And all these have left behind them for the world a marvel and a mine of treasure, as seen in their various speeches and writings. The truth is, that all these obtained that way of knowledge direct from the Divine source.

So, culture and learning must have been something inherent in Husain, being the grandson of the Prophet and the son of Ali. His childhood was spent in the company of his saintly grandfather, and his boyhood was replete with the wonderful trainings in various channels of angelic thoughts and heroic activities through his father, Ali. Ali's military skill was universally acknowledged, by friends and foes alike. It is believed that Hasan and Husain received their military training from such a father, the hero of many wars.

It is traditionally related that the Imam Husain was very eloquent. His speech was such that nobody would dare interfere and interrupt in the middle. Generally, sentences as the following were alive at the tip of his tongue: "O people ! strive to attain excellence and perfection, and be always ahead in accumulating such riches that Allah and your conscience allow. Make haste to get the aforesaid, for attainment of superiority and means for achievement of riches." Sometimes he would say that "beggars coming to us, due to their need, is one of the best blessings of God." He would point out that to "gratify the desire of the helpless is a virtue, and that whosoever adopted a generous habit is sure to be exalted in both the worlds. On the other hand, miserliness, he would add, can only bring down one to degradation."

Husain's intensity and depth of devotion to God was of such a nature that, in addition to his prayers or 'Namaz' (the prescribed form of Moslem prayers) to his beloved God, he offered one thousand 'Nafil' more (prayers in acknowledgement of God's kindness and love) in gratitude to His mercy and kindness. Once somebody happened to ask the son of Husain as to what the reason was for the fewness of the Imam's children. His intensely deep devotion to the Creator gave the Imam but very little time to be in the company of his wife whom he undoubtedly loved deeply ; but all worldly love and affairs had to give way to the supreme task of concentrated devotion and love to God. His twenty-five pil-

grimaces to Mecca on foot must show what an amount of self-denial was in him, a life ever restlessly and zealously devoted to the services of Allah.

All historians agree that Husain was singularly famous for his hospitality, kindness and generosity, taking care of the helpless and the oppressed, and giving alms to the needy and poor. He would support persons with food and clothes, and his money was freely and generously spent in the way of charity. Read the following instance:—

A man reduced to utter poverty came to Hasan's residence, and he sent to the generous Imam the following Arabic couplets, which when rendered in English, run thus:

“I am a helpless man with practically nothing left with me. Of course, my honour, my family pride, and my self-respect are still with me, which I have tried to save so far by every possible means. But finding so saintly and so divine a customer in you, I am anxious to sell the same to you.

The person waited a while, and having received no reply, then repeated his request by sending the following couplets:—

“If I go away from so generous a personality without my request fulfilled, and if the people ask me what the generous Husain gave me at my

request, (for, to come to your threshold means to return with as much as one desires from you) what shall I tell them? If I tell everyone that you gave me something, it will be a lie. And if I reveal the truth of having returned from you, receiving practically nothing, this revelation, I for one, never like."

The most generous Husain sent him at once ten thousand derhams, with the following quatrette in Arabic. Its translation runs thus:—

"O person! thou hast made much haste. And owing to that haste, I am not able to oblige thee with much. If thou hadst given me a little more time, I would have perhaps been able to satisfy thy request. I know it is very little and I hope you will accept it, and think as if thou hadst never requested, and I had given thee nothing."

It is related by Hadhrat Anas that one day the most venerable Husain was presented with a bouquet of flowers by one of his maid slaves. He smelt it; and then and there released the slave from the fetters of slavery. Anas, being surprised, asked Husain as to why he set free such a beautiful slave for so insignificant a gift. This was the sublime reply: "O Anas! do you not know what Allah says in his most sacred Book?—"And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet it with a better (greeting) than it or return it; surely Allah takes account of all things." (Holy Quran, IV: 88). The only best present

to her could be what I have done for the pleasure of God."

It will be rather out of our province to go citing instances after instances, proving the very many sublime qualities of this matchless personality. No wonder then that the Medinites, one and all, were keenly grieved at heart when he left Medina for Mecca, for, to them he was the Prophet, *Ali, Hasan, all combined. And again, it is no wonder that he soon became in Mecca also the most towering personality, guiding people in the ways of good life. Islam was built, and brought up by the life-blood of many faithful martyrs. When it was threatened with complete annihilation, its regeneration required the martyrdom of such a peerless and pure soul like Husain. His influence and fame still rings throughout the Islamic world. He died to live for ever. His sublime qualities had at last their triumph. What an amount of faith and patience we see in him! Verily, character is the crown and glory of life. Character and culture, greatness and goodness, these were put to the severest test. The highest cause, the cause of Allah, needed the services of such a person. Husain sacrificed his all, body, soul, kith and kin, to save Islam. Who else could stand the supreme ordeal? May his life and character guide us through all the darkness and doubts of life.

*Cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet Mohammad.

CHAPTER V.

After The Prophet's Demise.

We have seen how Islam was placed on a firm footing by the Holy Prophet, Muhammad. But the moment the good soul bade farewell to this world, the state of affairs drifted from bad to worse, ending in the inevitable Karbala tragedy. Ali, who had married the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, had also his claim to succeed to the Prophet's place as Caliph. "Ali is the master and controller of the affairs of every one whose master and controller I am", so said the Prophet himself. But Ali and afterwards his sons, Hasan and Husain, did not get the chance. The good teachings of Islam were replaced by utter irreligiousness, and the untold sufferings and calamities of the Prophet's descendants reached its pathetic climax in the martyrdom of Husain.

While Ali was very busy with Prophet's obsequies, unmindful of everything else, Abu Bakr became the 1st Caliph of the Moslem since then. Islam's position then, which was already shaken, would be made only worse, if Ali had interfered in the affair with his undoubted and unquestioned claim. He thought it best to keep aloof. He himself explained about his position thus: * "I perceived my own right, as ordained by God and

*See Nahjul Balagha by Ali, 'Khutba Shakshakiya.'

His Prophet, had been usurped by those who could put forward no claim to it. My eyes were full of tears as if dust had fallen in them. I meditated if I should bear the calamity patiently or should unsheath my sword. If I followed the first plan, the world would think that I was frightened of the Caliph's man power. If I choose the second alternative, Islam, which had not yet taken root, would easily have been eradicated and the people would consider that Ali was inclined towards worldly pomp. In obedience to the Prophet's dying words, I had to resign myself to the Will of God and, as pigeons accompany each other, I joined them in their flight. I went up as they did, and came down along with them so that I might guide them to the proper roosting." In accordance with this noble view, Ali was ever ready to help Abu Bakr whenever he was consulted regarding important affairs of State, and it must be said to the credit of Abu Bakr that he did not fail to recognise the superiority and ability of Ali.

Old companion Abu Bakr's reign lasted for only two and a half years. Omar reigned for ten years. Though Ali was given a chance to succeed Omar, one of the conditions imposed upon him was that he should follow the footsteps of the first two Caliphs. He could not naturally consent to this condition. Osman, was then chosen for the place.

Osman ruled for about twelve years. People got disgusted with Osman's rule. The infuriated

mob attacked his palace more than once, and on one occasion a sword from among the angry crowd fell on his head and he died.

Thus, the Caliphate fell vacant again. Chaotic condition prevailed everywhere in its worst aspect. None was now willing to take up the position of the Caliph. There was no other go except to request Ali to become the head of the Moslem world. Ali, at last, could not but consent to assume the responsible position of the Caliphate. Ali willingly and eagerly came forward to swear allegiance on this condition that he would not follow the first two Caliphs' examples but act according to Koran.

So began the strict and straightforward rule of Ali, and the Prophet's principles and Islamic religion were once again reinstated. When Ali took charge of the Bait-ul-Mal, the public Treasury, the first thing that he did was to distribute among a lakh of people the surplus amount of three lakhs that he found. This good action did not evidently please many who expected a good share. Ali's strictness thus created dis-satisfaction everywhere. His prediction that his strict rule would not be liked was but too true. He said: "Now like thirsty camels you come to the clear fountain and wish to drink of it by force, but mind you will not bear my hard and fast government in accordance with Divine orders, as your minds have long been polluted with worldly desires."

Ali dismissed all the wicked governors, appointing instead, God-fearing men. This only

augmented the prevailing dis-content. Rebellions and conspiracies followed, and Ali had to fight against a well organised force of his enemies, even Ayesha, the Prophet's wife, openly assisting in the rebellions and wars. Ali's success did not improve the situation. It may be rather out of place here to deal in detail about the various doings of the followers of Islam. Ali had to face in fight Moawiah, the Omiade Governor, who somehow escaped his deposition. The latter managed to gain everything by trickery, bribery and what not, and Ali's men deserted him. To make a long story short, the rule of this good son of Islam came to an abrupt end. In the morning as he was just prostrating in the mosque for prayer, the poisoned sword of one Abdur Rahman ibn Muljim cut deep his head. The blow proved fatal.

We have noted how Ali had tried his level best to protect the cause of Islam, and we have also noted how the forces against him were too much, ready to thwart his attempt at every step. Ever since the prophet's demise, right and righteousness had to desperately struggle against overwhelming wicked might.

Hasan, the son of Ali, succeeded to the Caliphate. But the then turbulent state of affairs was so uncongenial to Islamic principles of governance, as clearly testified to by Ali's strict rule, that Hasan rightly preferred to keep aloof, handing over the Caliphate to Moawiah under certain definite conditions. They were :—

- (1) That he (Moawiah) should act in accordance with the prescribed principles in the Holy Quran.
- (2) That he should not nominate anyone as his successor.
- (3) That all Muslims were to have peace, security and safety of life, and were to be allowed to settle anywhere in Syria, Iraq, Hedjaz, Yemen, etc., especially those friends and relation of Ali.

Thus began again the Omiade supremacy, with Moawiah as Caliph. It is needless to point out here how this Moawiah's signing the conditions, as drafted by Hasan, was but nominal. Though the good and innocent soul, Hasan thus tried to keep aloof from the wicked surroundings, even that way he was not left alone and safe. Soon, he was poisoned and killed by one of his wives, no doubt, instigated by Moawiah and his followers to carry out the treacherous deed. That many belonging to the Prophet's family were slaughtered in the most inhuman manner, is but another black chapter in this wicked Omiade's rule, casting to winds the solemn pledges and conditions. Says Husain, the brother of Hasan, in a letter thus :

"O Moawiah ! Are you not the murderer of Hajar bin Adi ? Did you not slaughter like sheep the most pious and God-fearing of men who

looked down on every innovation in religion as a heinous crime and who cared naught for the criticisms of the wrongful critics? You have killed a great number of those guiltless personages whom you had pledged to protect. Beware! You have broken your word by the sharp edge of your sword."

"You broke your solemn pledges, revolted against God, and slaughtered guiltless souls," so states Husain in another letter to Moawiah. The latter spared no pains to nominate his son, Yezid, a hopeless rake and downright drunkard and of illegitimate birth as his successor. He used bribery, treachery, trickery, etc., for obtaining allegiance to his son as the next Caliph. Despite all his ungodly and unscrupulous devices, he was meeting with stubborn oppositions from Mecca and Medina. Having done his best for his son, he died and Yezid took his place. The Ahlul-Bait had already suffered much; and still worse and worst days were in store for them and Islam.

"Avoid sitting on the wayside. If at all you wish to sit, then give it justice: Keep your eyes down-cast; don't try to harm anyone; invite people to that which is good; forbid the wrong; turn towards the afflicted and guide people to their destination."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER VI.

Yezid's Usurpation.

Having assumed the Caliph's position, the very first thing that Yezid did was to issue mandates to the governors of all provinces, demanding from them oath of allegiance to him. The governor of Medina, Valid received a similar mandate in which he ordered to see that all important persons in Medina, including Husain pledged their allegiance to the new Caliph, recognizing his suzerainty. Such of those who failed to take this pledge were to be beheaded forthwith without hesitation, and their heads were to be sent to the Court of the Caliph.

It goes without saying that Husain refused to pledge obedience, when Yezid's mandate was read out to him by the governor. Soon, his position was sure to become hot, and he might be beheaded at any moment. That won't do. That will be only strengthening the hands of the enemies of Islam who were bent upon now to root out Islam and the Ahlul-Bait at any cost. Yezid was the worst specimen of humanity, capable of assisting in the worst crimes. Ali, also suffered martyrdom. Hasan's timely seclusion and perfect non-interference availed him little, for martyrdom was forced upon him. Husain was not prepared for this sort of silent and secret

martyrdom which could do no good for the cause of Islam. He must leave Medina to Mecca, a safer place, which was a refuge for all.

Standing before his grandfather's grave, with eyes filled with tears, he cried thus, explaining his delicate and dangerous position: "O Apostle of Allah! observe what thy son experiences at the hands of thy disciples. If I swear fealty to Yezid, an irreligious drunkard and debauchee, I lose my faith in God and hence become an infidel. If I refuse to do so, I have to lose my life. Guide me as to what I should do."

Many tried to dissuade Husain from his project. The pang of separation was too much for the Medinites, for, Husain was the most beloved of all. Heart-rending cries were heard from ladies who said: "This day we lose from our midst the Prophet, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain; for, in Husain were alive all the attributes and good qualities of the Prophet and the* Ahlul-Bait." So, Husain had to tear away from Medina. Accompanied by his family, friends and relations, he at last reached Mecca safe, and took refuge in the Kaba, spending his time in prayers and meditations.

*'Ahlul-Bait' means the house-hold or the progeny of the Holy Prophet Mohammad.

CHAPTER VII.

Husain at Mecca.

Such a worthy grandson of the Prophet, the best living exponent of the principles and practices of Islam, no wonder, exerted a great and healthy influence over the Meccans, undoing in his own, silent way the irreligious atmosphere created by the most irreligious ruler, Yezid. One who took pleasure in publicly denouncing and degrading the Koran and the Holy Prophet, would even go to the extent of treating slightly the very sanctity of the Kaba, venturing, in the height of his blind antagonism, to murder within its precincts the grandson of the Great Prophet. But Husain patiently awaited the development of events.

At this time, the Kufians wanted a spiritual leader, for, they had grown pretty disgusted with Yezid's irreligious ways. But they were a sort of people who could not be trusted so easily, so wavering and unprincipled they were, despite their solemn letters to Husain, requesting his guidance. At last, Husain found it difficult and even delicate to avoid his proceeding to Kufa, when he received the following letter :—

“Everything has been arranged and an organized army is awaiting for your assistance.

Please make haste and come to us. You will be a criminal before God, if you do not comply with our request, for our aims are religious. It is your duty as an Imam to guide us in the path of God when we invite you."

A wise counsel it was that the Meccans gave to Husain, when they suggested him to send to Kufa in advance one trusted by him, so that a correct idea might be obtained about the prevailing political atmosphere there. Accordingly, Muslim, a cousin of Husain, was asked to proceed to the place. The Kufians received the emissary of Husain with great enthusiasm and about 12,000 people were ready to pay allegiance to the son of Ali. To this effect, Muslim wrote to his master. With all his family Husain started for Kufa, though this time also he was much dissuaded from his intention. Despite Muslim's letter, we shall see how the Meccans' fears were well-grounded. The shadow is cast. We seem to scent the impending tragedy.

It was no fault of Muslim that he drew in his letter to Husain a rosy picture about the situation at Kufa. But it needs little time only to make a clear sky cloudy. Suddenly the tables were turned, and while Husain, with his retinue, was on the way to Kufa, unexpected dramatic events had already taken place there. Yezid was informed with a good deal of exaggeration how the goodnatured and sympathetic Ansar Governor, Noman Bin Bashir, was conniving at the actions

of Muslim, Husain's man; and so, Yezid immediately ordered Abdulla, Governor of Basra, tyrannous and oppressive by nature and so quite-suited to his purpose, to take charge of the Governorship of Kufa also. The order to him from the Caliph ran thus: "You are the best arrow which I can shoot towards my enemies. Hence I order you to lose no time in proceeding to Kufa. Murder Ali's descendants without sparing a single soul among them. Search out Muslim, as one searches out a lost jewel, behead him and send his head to my Court."

With all his irreligiousness and un-Islamic ways, Moawiah had at least a show of respect towards the Prophet's family, and before his death he had specially instructed and advised his son to treat Husain with due respect. The above letter shows that Yezid was bent upon carrying on a ruthless and reckless crusade against Islam and the Ahlul-Bait. We have already begun to scent pretty strongly the impending tragedy. The irresolute and cowardly Kufians' sudden enthusiasm cooled down also in a moment, when they were threatened by the new Governor with merciless wholesale slaughter in case they revolted against the Caliph. Muslim was hunted out, as ordered in the letter, and was mercilessly beheaded, his head being subsequently sent to Yezid. Muslim, as a worthy Hashimite, with that remarkable courage and joy, faced the inevitable end. Not satisfied with this, the two younger sons that he had taken with him, met also the same fate, two tender and guiltless souls,

sacrificed at the altar of blood-curling heartlessness.

Quite unaware of all these happenings and mainly trusting the hopeful tidings from Muslim, Husain with his family and relatives, as already stated, was marching towards Kufa. After several days of continuous journey, he came upon that barren, desert tract called Karbala. By this time, he had already received information regarding the heart-rending events that had taken place at Kufa. He was almost benumbed and perplexed with overwhelming grief. He did not know what to do, and was almost on the point of abandoning his project, intending to retrace his steps. But inscrutable are the ways of Allah. For, life and courage were infused in him from an unexpected quarter. Seeing his father in that helpless state, the second son of Husain said thus to his father: "Father! are we not on the right?" "By God! we have ever been on the right," replied the father. Then added the other: "When it is so, what fear have we to give our lives for the right?" Who will not be electrified by such words?

Many had accompanied Husain from Mecca; most probably they were under the impression that they could share the plunders of war. So, on his way, Husain thought it his duty to inform them of his grim and solemn purpose. He addressed them as follows: "You have witnessed what has befallen us. It is the nature of time to

create constant changes. Virtue is vanishing fast and vice is surviving. A time has come when the believers cannot aim at Virtue but through death, and the infidel at his cherished vice but through life. I warn you with the announcement that all those that lack the courage to endure the wounds of swords and lances should separate from our ranks and leave us to our fate."

These words acted like an acid test. The Chaff, the faithless section of the followers, it is needless to mention, flew in different directions, leaving Husain with a handful of his best and worthiest followers, determined to follow him unto death. It was with these that he arrived at Karbala. Our main purpose in quoting the above sublime words is to show the sublime thought behind them, that give the gist of the way of Husain's inevitable and unparalleled sacrifice at the altar of truth and righteousness. The readers are also requested to follow Husain and his immortal retinue, and let the deserters take care of themselves.

**"O Lord! Pardon such sins of mine as bring down
Thy curse or punishment."** —*Ali.*

**"The highest aspiration of wild beasts is to be
oppressive over others."** —*Ali.*

"Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

—*Mohammad.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Towards Kufa.

Husain and party had by this time reached the neighbourhood of Kufa. Yezid's General Hurr, at the head of a reconnoitering force, coming from Kufa, approached the Imam. Although he was in the service of Yezid, he loved Husain and his family very much. He, therefore, explained the situation in detail to that worthy son, pointing out to him his delicate position, since Yezid's express order to him was to surround Husain and take him straight to Kufa. Somehow, his sympathy and affection for the Ahlul-Bait had the upper hand; he did not then carry out the order of his superior.

Proceeding further, and having made another halt, Husain once more pointed out to his followers the grim gravity of the situation. He said: "The form which the affairs have taken is manifest to you. The world has changed its colour. Virtue has vanished, leaving slight traces. This is the age of Wrong and the followers of Right have passed away. The time has come when the true believer has to separate himself from the mischievous mutineer and turn towards the Creator. Life with tyrants is hard to me, and I consider my death as martyrdom."

Husain had now almost reached the place of his tragedy. Hurr, who was watching and following him, was served by a messenger with a peremptory order from Yezid, the purport of

which ran thus: "Arrest Husain, hold him fast and lead him to a waterless plain, unprotected on any side by a place of refuge. I have commanded my messenger not to part with you, until you have successfully executed my order; he would then return and inform me of all your affairs."

At last Husain and party reached Karbala, the place of affliction and trouble, the region where his and his family's slaughter was fated to occur. The melancholic and gloomy atmosphere around caused Husain to ask the people there the name of the place, and he was informed that it was called Karbala. He had already received the Divine signal as to this place being his final destination. His horse suddenly stopped, and refused to move on. Another horse was called for; that also refused to move. Even a camel was tried, but to no purpose. Then it was that he enquired about the place. The Imam decided to camp there. The tragedy proper begins now in right, grim earnest. Let the readers read the following few lines from the able pen of Sir Syed Ameer Ali, so that their minds might be solemnly attuned to peruse patiently the succeeding dramatic events leading up to the climax. He says: "No event in history surpasses in pathos the scenes enacted on this spot. For days their tents were surrounded; and as the cowardly hounds dared not come within the reach of the sword of Ali's son, they cut the victims off from the waters of the Tigris. The sufferings of the poor band of martyrs were terrible."

CHAPTER IX.

At Karbala.

Husain and his party of seventyone followers arrived at Karbala on the second of Muharram. Hurr and his soldiers had already posted themselves near the Euphrates, so that Husain and his party might not proceed further and so that they might be prevented from taking water from the river. A waterless, dreary plain, scorching heat, and the river bank, blocked and guarded, what else is needed to make the situation miserable? Men can forego food, but what about thirst? Tender ones, old persons, women all thirsting, thirsting for hours and hours together, with the river close by, that was the worst of it, that was the grim irony.

The next day, there arrived Omar bin Saad, with an army of six thousand strong. Soon, other commanders with their forces also rushed to the spot. Yezid's army, all told numbering eighty thousand, composed mostly of mercenary soldiers, filled the field of Karbala. What a sharp contrast between the contending parties not only in numbers, but in everything! On the one side were ranged mail-clad warriors, chiefly mercenaries, who had enrolled themselves in the army for the sake of spoils only. Whereas, on the other side, were men, who in utter disregard of all

earthly considerations, had willingly accompanied Husain to defend the Sacred Cause of Islam. Although pinch of thirst and hunger, together with the anxiety for their women-folk, had driven the followers of Husain to desperation, yet they possessed in them those firm, stout and unshaken hearts, which would have encouraged them in the execution of their noble mission, had even the lofty mountains of the world or the gurgling waves of the sea stood in their way. The one-side represented mere brute force, whereas the other represented character and self-determination. Soul-force, righteousness, virtue and truth, all these, were struggling hard against mighty brute-force, vice, wrong and falsehood.

Omar bin Saad held interviews with Husain, and the latter showed him the various letters written by the Kufians, and he explained to the General the purely spiritual aim of his undertaking. The hard-hearted and wretched Yezid could not brook his General's sympathetic interviews with Husain. His strong letter to Omar is worth quoting, because it reveals outright his devilish nature. The letter says :

“Omar bin Saad ! I learn that you spend full nights out of your camp along with Husain near the bank of the Euphrates. You hold friendly discourses with him on various topics and show him every mildness. Now, as soon as this reaches you and you read it, see that no drop of water is carried to Husain's camp, if you

mind your own welfare. Post your men between the Euphrates and Husain's soldiers. Attack and destroy them. I allow the use of the water of the Euphrates to Christians and Jews, but shut it up against Husain, his relatives and friends. Guard the bank, so that they may not be able to take any water, in return for what they have done to the pious Caliph, Osman, who was so unjustly treated. Though I know that harming dead bodies does no good or evil, but as it drops from my pen, it is binding on you to trample their dead bodies under the hoofs of horses, after you have killed them. If you are reluctant in carrying out my orders, hand over the charge of my forces to the bearer, Shimar Ziljoushan, and come over to me to wait for my future orders."

"No slave would condescend to undertake the murder of an innocent soul like Husain." Thus remarked Omar, having read his superior's letter; save Yezid, the wretched and the most wicked, who would not have sympathised with the Ahlul-Bait, and whose heart would not have melted for the purest soul—Husain? Persons like Hurr and Omar, though they were under Yezid's service, guided by worldly gains, could not but be moved, by the divinely nature of the Prophet's grandson, and Karbala's tragedy has its slightly relieving and soothing features in such human goodness that glimmered here and there, despite Yezidic darkness, threatening to envelope everything. It is pertinent to mention here in advance how even Shimar's wife turned

away her face in utter disgust and horror, when her husband showed her in triumphant glee the gory head of Husain, and it is said that from that time forward she renounced all intercourse with him. (Shimar was the murderer of Husain).

Those pitiless puppets of Yezid not only denied water to the Prophet's holy souls, but even went to the length of ridiculing them beyond imagination. Horses, dogs, and even pigs, freely drank from the river, but vessels filled with water were shown to the thirsty Ahlul-Bait, only to be spilt before them with devilish glee and ridicule. This was more than adding insult to injury. See what one damned and debased said to Husain: "O Husain! don't you see the crystal water, as pure and transparent as the atmosphere above? By God! you will not be able to allow a drop pass through your throat until you die with a parched tongue."

With absolutely no chance to taste a drop of water, those in Husain's camp, young and old, women and children, passed the seventh day of *Muharram also. Oh! the parched lips of the tender ones, no water even to moisten their lips! And mothers sitting by them in utter helplessness! The eighth of Muharram dawned. Husain could not bear to see the piteous plight of children panting for water. That night, he sent his brother, Abbas, along with his fifty valiant men, to bring water from the river. It was not without severe struggle with the enemies, who were posted on

*Muharram is the first month of Islamic Calendar.

the bank, that they succeeded at last to bring to the camp twenty pitchers of water. After this, it is needless to mention, that Omar made arrangements to see that the bank was guarded more carefully and strictly.

In the morning, on the ninth of Muharram, Husain saw a big army advancing towards his camp. Mounting upon his horse, he marched towards the advancing force. That was the opportune moment to have his last say to them, for, he thought it his solemn duty to try all possible means to avoid bloodshed and slaughtering, to prevent them from committing the worst crime of slaughtering innocent souls. Thus, he addressed: "O people that call themselves Moslems! Know who I am and what lineage I have. Then consider well, whether it is allowable for you to murder me. I am the only surviving son of your Prophet's daughter. I am the son of Ali, the selected servant of God. I declare, for your information my faith in God, His Holy Prophets and all that was sent down on Muhammad, the last of them. Was not Hamza, the chief of the martyrs during the time of the Prophet, an Uncle of my father? Was not Jaffer, who was given wings to fly to Paradise, my father's own brother? Did not the Prophet declare about my deceased brother and myself, 'These two are the Chiefs of the Youths of Paradise'? Did he not say, 'I leave behind me two weighty things, the Book of God and my children'? These things have certainly reached

your ears. If you confess my statement, you are on the right. But if you think I lie, which God forbid, I have never done in my life, there are still alive the companions of the Prophet. You can ascertain this from them."

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Then Husain had a conference with Omar bin Saad to impress upon him and his accomplices what a heavy crime it would be on their part to attack him who had done no wrong. But finding that his advice had no effect at all on him, he sent a message to the enemy through Abbas, requesting a night's respite for prayer and meditation before the commencement of the fight. Better and wiser counsel prevailing, the respite was granted. Then the two armies retired. Despite this temporary lull and truce, the members of Husain's camp continued to suffer more and more from unbearable thirst and hunger. The shades of night had fallen fast, and Husain's camp was surrounded on all sides by the enemy's forces. The impending gloom of tragedy seemed to have already cast its shadow over that dreary, desert plain. All forces of darkness and devilry seemed to comprise in a body to destroy those helpless band of innocent souls. Oh! what a heavy, feverish night it was!

CHAPTER X.

The Sad Night.

That sad, unforgettable night, ever memorable in history! What a thrill of horror, sympathy and sensation, must pass through our minds, when each scene of that night seems to pass afresh before us! So vividly is the whole picture drawn on our mental canvas. Callous Karbala! How dark and fierce thou looked that night!

The wicked soldiers of Yezid were restlessly guarding the tents of Husain. Deafening and sickening was the noise among them: beating of drums, blowing of trumpets, sharpening of swords. They were making all horrible preparations to massacre the matchless innocents. They had lost their heads; and hearts, of course, they had not. Even wild animals, even the most carnivorous specimens, would have shrunk from approaching those holy band of Husain. But these inhuman human wolves were bent upon their fullest crime. Their howling must have sent a shudder of fear into the minds of Husain's women and children. O! in what a pathetic plight they were, already famished by hunger and parched by thirst!

Within those holy tents, quite a different atmosphere prevailed, despite the threatening calamity. All were engaged in deep meditation

and soul-thrilling prayers to God. That extraordinary divine spirit and devotion had enkindled and enlivened all of them, and old and young were every moment anxiously awaiting to claim the partnership of inevitable death. A new life was glowing within them. They would stand by Husain, ready to be a willing sacrifice in his cause. "Let the morning dawn, and we shall show how to defend the son of the Apostle of God to the last." These were their words. Each was preparing with that peculiar joy to meet the lord. We shall quote one typical incident of that night to show how the sublimest spirit animated Husain's people. Zainab, Husain's sister, dressing her two little sons in their prettiest garments, impressed in them the gravity of the sacrifice to be made in the following words :

"Mind not your ages, but think of your connections. Your paternal grand-father, Jaffer, was so brave that as long as he was alive, none but he could carry the Prophet's banner and he held it so fast that it could not be captured by the enemy. Only once it fell to the ground, when both his hands were severed from his body and he could no longer hold it. Your maternal grandfather, Ali, has established a name unsurpassed by any. Victory had been certain, in whichever battle he was asked to appear. Be it known to you that just as the field of Mina, near Mecca, is reddened with the blood of animals, sacrificed at the Haj pilgrimage so will the opposite plains be rendered crimson tomorrow by the blood

of the Prophet's family, and its supporters. Would you allow me on the Day of Judgment to present an honourable face before my mother, Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet? This can only be done by your interception between your uncle and his enemies, by sacrificing your lives for his. Should you do so, I shall excuse your dues of my milk with which I nourished you in your infancy. I shall honour your blood by colouring my face with it and I shall glorify your bodies by laying them on the carpet of the Prophet."

To Husain, heaviest and most trying must have been that night. But he had the one supreme consolation that at the last hour he still retained an extra-ordinarily staunch band of followers, who had unanimously resolved to stand by him and die for him. He said: "In fact I am proud of these friends of mine. None by this time could ever get such a number of true and sincere friends as I have". Even after informing them that he was prepared to stand the trial alone, that the enemy was desirous of having his blood alone, and that all were at perfect liberty to make good their escape in the cover of darkness, adamantive was their resolution. "Never may God show us the day that we survive." Who will not be electrified to face death or even worse, having heard the pathetic statement from Husain. It runs thus:

"Now, O people! I withdraw my hold upon you. I lighten your shoulders from the burden

of your pledged attachment to me and I freely allow you to desert me. If you are afraid or ashamed of being blamed, I assure you that the darkness of night would sufficiently cover your being recognised. I advice you in this way, because the enemy is desirous of my blood alone and would not question any one else, provided he is sure of his hold on me."

Restless, sleepless, and busy was Husain that night, going through multitudinous responsible duties. He had to pacify and console the ladies and children, instilling in them that spiritual courage and life, so that they may face as true martyrs the worst distress that was in store the next day. He had to impart his final religious lessons to all his friends and relations who had so readily volunteered to suffer in the holy cause. He must prepare everything for the next day's defence, and he must put forth all his spiritual fervour in his final communion with God, so that he might obtain from that Perennial Fountain, full, invincible, inward strength and courage O! what a tower of patience, determination, and faith! And at the height of distress, what a deep devotion to Him! Self-abnegation and selflessness, entire and whole-hearted submission to His Supreme Will—all these reached their marvellous climax and sublimity in him. It was a momentous, wondrous memorable night, the holiest struggling against the unholyest. Allaho-Akbar!

CHAPTER XI.

The Day of Martyrdom.

Over Karbala dawned the tenth day of Muharram, the last day on earth for those little band of martyrs. Along with his associates, Husain performed the morning prayers, and about this, the sickly son of Husain, Imam Zain-ul-Abidin, the only survivor of the Prophet's family, states thus: "My father performed his prayers in the dusk of the tenth morning, followed by his associates and when he finished it, he lifted up his hands and said: "O Lord! I rely on Thee in all my sufferings and Thou art my hope in all my trials and misfortunes; worldly troubles are such that they carry away one's patience and control over one's self; if Thou dost not help me, Thou givest opportunity to the enemies to laugh and ridicule. Thou art my refuge and place of safety. I complain to Thee and to none but Thee of my adverse circumstances. Thou wilt grant me patience to endure troubles that await me and will keep me firm and resolute to suffer ungrudgingly the coming hardships. Thou art the controller of all Destinies and it is in Thy power to make one attain one's object or lose it."

The battle-drum was beaten; the combat was about to commence. Even at that last

moment the Imam wanted to point out to the enemies the bitter folly of their move, wishing to dissuade them from committing the foulest crime on earth. Not that he was afraid of death at their hands, but he had that deep and limitless compassion and mercy towards those misguided opponents. Along with his faithful small band, he came out cap-a-pie into the battlefield and seated on a camel, he delivered a stirring sermon in Arabic to the party in front, appealing to them in the name of God and his Beloved Prophet of Arabia, not to commit such a horrible deed. The men in front stood dumb-founded and made no reply. Before the Imam, Burair had already stirred the hearts of the opponents with a speech. All were fully convinced, all were deeply moved by these speeches, but none dared to do the right. The naturally sympathetic Hurr was now in a fix. Husain's appeals went straight into his heart. At any rate, these speeches saved him. He, with his three companions, went over to the Imam's side, and he also addressed the enemies on behalf of the Prophet's family. The only reply to his speech was a volley of arrows. The Imam summed up his arguments thus:

"I have now finished my arguments and have declared my choice of death while fighting along with my few disciples. But remember, by God! you will not survive long after us. The mill-stone of death will roll over your heads and will grind you to powder. My father has informed me the prediction of my grandfather to this effect."

“Now begin your attack. Let your friends join you and let what is to happen, happen. Attack and give us no time; for, I have entrusted all my affairs to the powerful hand of God who controls every creature.”

Husain then rode on a horse, arranged his loving companions' line, and waited for the commencement of the battle from the other side.

A man named Abdulla came up at a gallop on his horse. Surprised to see fire kindled for safety around the Imam's tent, he haughtily and impertinently exclaimed: “Husain! it be announced to you that you have chosen fire for yourself even in this world from now.” The thirsty Imam prayed to Allah for an immediate punishment for the wretch, with the result that his horse, to the great surprise of all, jumped into the fiery trench, where both the rider and the ridden were burnt to ashes.

Immediately after this, Omar bin Saad picked up his arrow and calling others to be his witness, discharged it as the first arrow towards the Imam. It was a sign to begin the combat in right earnest. Arrows after arrows were sent by others in the same direction; but none were killed. Then there ensued single combats. Two persons from Omar's side came out and desired somebody from the Imam's side to fight. Accordingly, two from the holy band went forth for the contest, slaying the two enemies in a moment. A state of guerilla warfare continued for some time, with single

person or in pairs from either side, until fifty faithfuls of the Imam went to the isles of Bliss, sending hundreds of beastly foes to regions of eternal fire. Hurr exhibited extraordinary valour, swiftly despatching many from the enemies' rank. "He fell upon the columns of the enemy like an enraged tiger and tried to break through them. He created quite a bloody sight in the attempt and killed eighty-two of their number." He kept on slaughtering the foes until the last moment, though he was besieged on all sides by showers of darts. He was utterly fatigued, and had almost neared his end. He was taken to Husain's camp. "O Lord ! Accept him as Thy Guest in Paradise and have him matched with Hourie." He died a brave and true martyr.

The aged veteran from Husain's camp, Muslim bin Ausaja, showed a lion's ferocity and valour in killing one after another fifty of the best soldiers of the enemy who were sent to face him. "Though enfeebled by age and three day's hunger, he exhibited to the world, not by words, but by deeds, that it is not bread and water (alone) that keeps a man alive and strong, but his faith in the Lord and the word of the Almighty." At last he also fell a prey to the enemy's darts. Husain blessed him, reciting the verse, "There have been some whom the Decree of God has overtaken and some still in expectation of it and have not changed their minds." Thus, by noon time had fallen many of the valiant followers of the Imam, and there remained

only the relatives. Aged men and mere boys fought like lions and fell like true martyrs. Famished and thirsty, they fought with invincible, divine valour.

It is related that on the tenth day when the grim fight ensued between Imam Husain's party and Yezid's men, who were thirty thousand according to a report and people were being killed like chaff and when the sincere and faithful companions of Husain were sacrificing themselves, one by one, so much so that even Bareer Hamdani was too killed then and there, the mother of Abdullah Kalbi, whose name was Qamar, called forth his son and said to him thus:—"Although thou art the peace of my heart and the income of whole of my life and thy separation is unwilling and painful, but what can I do? I see that the earning of Fatimah (Prophet's dear daughter and the mother of Imam Husain) is being robbed. Nothing is more dear to me than the son of the Prophet-Husain-thou seest that the Imam often looks with the sight of sigh towards the tent of chastity. His restlessness and anxiety is considerably increased since morning. The day of faithfulness and name is this very day and that I wish thou shouldst not too spare thy life."

That blessed son of that lady replied:—"Thousand lives may be sacrificed at Husain's altar; blessed is he who partakes in this holy task, only I wish I may bid farewell to my wife, for, only 17 days have passed, that I married

and that she has left all her relations for my sake." Qamar said :—"What harm is there in doing so, but know that women are generally fools. I am afraid lest you may be led away by her love."

He proceeded straight towards his wife and spoke :—"Though it is not a custom that a newly married bridegroom should go to fight leaving his bride behind, yet I am obliged and helpless. How it can be endured when I see the house of the son-in-law of the Prophet destroyed and routed and that I should keep aloof myself? I wish I may get myself sacrificed at his altar." That sincere lady sighted and said:—"Alas! there is no Jihad prescribed for women-folk, otherwise I myself would have also availed of this opportunity of sacrifice." I, however, am content with your proposal, you are going away but you should also make this promise before the Imam that without me you would not enter paradise."

In short, both these couple came before the Imam. Wahab requested for the permission of going to the fight. The wife addressed:-"O son of the Prophet! I have two objects in view too, the one being that you should take promise from my husband that he should not go to Heaven except with me, the other being that I may be permitted to remain as a servant of Ahlul-Bait (the family of the Prophet) so that I may be safe from the sight of illegal man." The Imam having heard this, wept, and Wahab spoke:- " You are witness

that I promise that without my wife I would never step into Paradise and you make her remain amongst the servants of Ahlul-Bait."

However, Wahab, proceeded to the battle-field and having rooted in ground the spear began reciting the quatrette:

(i.e.) "I am Wahab son of Abdullah Kalbi. You will soon see me and my strokes and my attacks in the battle. My fight is not like that of children playing."

Having said so much, he spurred his horse on towards the battle-field. Hearts trembled. A strong well-equipped army with sabres, swords, scimitars and lances to fight against a handful of persons, armed and armoured only with unflinching faith. There were to be no yells and war cries on the part of the Imam Husain's men. It was a serious battle. Men fell before him like chaff and his sword was showing no mercy. When Wahab saw that the enemy scattered, he came to his mother and addressed:—"You get contented with me"? She said:—"Till I see you bleeding before Husain."

In the meanwhile, cavalry came, surrounded them on all sides and thus the fight ensued anew. Nineteen infantry men and twelve cavalry men were slain at his hands. Suddenly a sword was thrown at him from a distance and his two hands were cut down. When the mother saw her son in this state, she lost her balance of mind and she cried:- "Bravo son! Thou shouldst not lose

heart. Courage! Help thy master. Desert him not." "Return to tent, I am struggling hard," roared he and in a short time he came exhausted, bleeding and powerless, he could resist no more. He fainted and fell down from his horse. Soon he succumbed to death and became 'shaheed.' The wife of Wahab seeing her husband in that dying state, held his head as if to address something but for a forceful stroke on her head by a soldier of Yezid, instigated at the sign of Shimar, and she breathed her last. Thus the orale turned out true. She and her husband both went to Paradise together as the promise was made formerly.

There is a report also that a man of a certain tribe came to Imam Husain and requested for water. The man was apparently thirsty. But the Imam told him that throughout his life he did not reject the request of anyone in the world but then he was obliged and helpless. Men's barbarism and cruelty can go no more than to seize a man in a helpless condition and starve him to death. All the troubles were due to State and worldly desires. Yezid knew that Imam Husain was the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad and the son of Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. But what tempted him was luxury, money and matter. Intoxicant with the Rule and men at his disposal, he cared not for Islam or the Son of Islam. Rightly said the Saint of India Khwaja Moeenuddin of Ajmer when eulogising Husain-ibn-Ali in his well known quatrette;—

“Husain is Lord and the lord of lords. Husain himself is Islam and the Shield of Islam.”

“Though he gave his head (for Islam) but never pledged Yezid. Truly Husain is the Founder of “There is no deity except Allah.”

It was the relatives' turn now to face the enemy and suffer martyrdom. Muslim's two sons were boiling with rage on account of their father's unhappy end at Kufa, and were only waiting for an opportunity to avenge his death. With extreme unwillingness, Husain granted them permission to fight and they were the first two relatives who sacrificed their lives for the Imam. The six brothers and three nephews of Muslim, son of Aqeel, followed the worthy lead of Muslim's sons, and gladly shared the glorious fate, after exhibiting that extraordinary Hashimite skill and valour. Seeing this, Zainab, Husain's sister, was eager to sacrifice her two tender sons of eight and nine only for the holy cause. She somehow obtained the necessary permission from the brother. The noble mother showed no sign of distress, when afterwards these two precious gems were brought to her dead. “No nation, no record of history can ever produce the example of a mother, so nobly sacrificing her own sons for Right and Truth and displaying no fret or distress at the loss of such beautiful and obedient children.”

The sons of Hasan and the sons of Ali (half-brothers of Husain) were the next victims. The name of Qasim, the son of Hasan, stands out

prominent. He was just in his teens, but fought like a true Hashimite lion, and soon seventy of the opponents fell a prey to his sword. None could overpower this brave boy face to face. He was struck unaware from behind; the sword's blow fell on his head and that proved fatal.

It is not possible to give details about the valourous deeds of the other sons of Hasan and the sons of Ali. It may be noted here in general that every individual belonging to the Hashimites proved matchless and invincible in single combats, and they even rushed into the very thick of the enemy's columns, fighting and killing with desperate, divine courage. But what could they do against over-whelming numbers, against showers of arrows, against treachery? Exhibiting their best and suffering the worse, they willingly and gladly placed their lives at the altar of martyrdom.

Abbas was now the only surviving brother of Husain. He could not bear to see the children almost in a dying condition for want of water. He was determined to bring water for them from the river. Husain's safety of life was guaranteed so far as Abbas was by him. Now that he was leaving his side, facing all risks to bring water, the ladies grew desperately anxious for Husain's safety, and cried: "Now we lose all hopes in Husain. He cannot live after Abbas is gone." And to Husain it was the most painful separation. As usual Abbas was prevented from taking water

from the river. His spirited statement to the enemies is worth quoting here :

“ We are ourselves swords of the Hashimite tribe and are sharper than the sharpest edges to shed your blood. O sons of adultery and of the opposers of Right! Alas! If our grandfather, the Prophet, had survived and seen the calamities that his progeny had been made to suffer! Death under swords is glorifying when Paradise is its fruit. Damned be this world and its transitory pleasures. We expect salvation of our grand-father, the Prophet.”

Baffling and battling, the heroic Abbas succeeded in reaching the river. But while he was returning with his leathern bag of water, he was encountered by shower of arrows. An arrow struck blind one of his eyes, and soon his arm supporting the water bag was severed by the blow of a sword. Another blow, severing his other arm too, made him helpless, and he fell down with the water bag. In that helpless state, a wretch with a heavy club dealt a blow on his head which proved fatal. Till the last moment, clinging to the water bag, he had faced overwhelming numbers with desperate valour. The noble hero, Husain's life and soul, was also added to the list of that day's martyrdom.

Ali Akbar, the son of Husain a youth of eighteen summers only, and who resembled the Prophet in every respect, was the next precious victim. Amidst the woeful cries of the ladies, controlling

with difficulty and surging paternal emotions, Husain himself equipped that handsome youth with the necessary garments and fighting implements, and sent him to the field, with his pathetic words addressed to God: "*Bear witness, O my Lord ! I despatch a son, that resembles Thy Prophet most in formation of body, in character, and in tone and in mode of speaking, to fall into the jaws of death. Whenever we grew restless with a burning desire to see Thy Prophet, we cooled our eyes, by casting a glance on this young form.*"

Seeing such a noble and handsome youth, even the enemy could not but exclaim with admiration thus: "It seems the Prophet has returned with fresh youth and vigour." And to the admiring foes, he spoke: "I am Ali, son of Husain, who is the son of Ali. By the Kaba, the House of God, we are your masters through the Prophet. I now intend to destroy you by my sword, assisting the cause of my father. By God, those born of adultery can never rule us." With all their admiration and with all the full knowledge about the superior position of the Ahlul-Bait, the wretched and wicked foes were relentless and resolute in their dire and dark destruction. What could valour do? The undaunted youth was exhausted by the scorching heat, and with unbearable thirst he returned to his father after a desperate struggle. The father's piteous helplessness to cool him even with drop of water, must have created a scene

unparalleled in history, and this feeble pen refuses to write about it. The father could only give the following consoling words to his dearest one: "Your grandfather is waiting with a cup of heavenly drink to quench your thirst. Return and prepare for death; may it be wholesome to you." Why continue the heart-rending narration of this youth's further desperate struggle with those pitiless foes? He was pierced through and through with arrows and spears, and wounded everywhere with repeated attacks of swords. Anybody else in Husain's place would have been shocked to instantaneous death, at the sight of such a bloody butchery of a dear one. Ali also followed others. Here, in that worthy Imam, patience, fortitude, faith, control and will power reached their sublimest heights. The darkest hour of tragedy had already approached and the severest trial awaited the grandson of the Prophet. Allah could alone arm him with that needed grim determination. It is said that the Imam had an erect body and a black beard in the morning of that tragic day. Repeated and swift clamities had within a few hours bent low his frame, and all hairs had turned completely grey.

In that helpless and exhausted state, the Imam mounted his horse, and lifting up his infant son of six months, Ali Asghar by name, cried: 'O Lord! This is the last ruby in my treasures. Him I sacrifice in Thy path'. Then, to the blood-thirsty wolves in front of him, he made this most pathetic appeal: "Of what crime can

you accuse this child? You blame me for not acknowledging the sovereignty of Yezid. But can any law, any religion or any sane brain, lay any charge on this infant? This infant of mine is about to die of thirst. His mother has lost her milk through lack of water. Just a few drops to refresh the child. If you think that I want water trickishly, putting forward this young one, I will leave him in your arms. You may quench his thirst and return him to me". The pathetic plight of that innocent babe, no doubt, frozened and benumbed the hearts of the onlookers. Omar saw the magic effect, and immediately ordered one Harmala, the stoniest specimen of the lot, to carry out the blackest deed. He transfixed the babe's neck with a poisoned arrow and the tender thing breathed its last with its last gaze and smile at Husain. The cup of misery was now quite full. Inconceivable distress and agony filled the heart of that great soul.

"He is true who protecteth his brother, both present and absent."

—*Mohammad.*

"One who is young shall not attain to Paradise by neglecting his parents when they are old."

—*Mohammad.*

"To him who, being young, honoureth the old, on account of their age, may God appoint those who shall honour him when he is stricken in years."

—*Mohammad.*

CHAPTER XII.

The Grand Martyrdom.

So, the moment approached for Husain to offer his own sacred blood to the thirsty and greedy devil. He, who was so greatly loved and honoured by the Prophet of Arabia, was in such a helpless plight, that every inch of the earth below and every span of the sky above, seemed to be bearing the venomous nature against him. Even at that last moment, his request to Omar, either to send him back to the place of his grand-father's grave to lead a peaceful life, or to allow him a draught of water, in case of their grim determination to fight against him, was totally unheeded. "Not a single drop will be allowed to you," was the cursed and callous reply from Omar. He then delivered stirring sermon to the crowd facing him, but they fell on deaf ears and deadened hearts. He was only throwing pearls before swines. Still, the readers who must surely possess the finer feelings, should not be deprived of the chance. One pretty long address is quoted below :

"Know ye: I am the son of Ali of the Hashimite tribe. This is enough greatness for me, if I am to boast at all. My grand-father is the Apostle of God, whose superiority over every

living being is confirmed. We are certainly divine lights illuminated to guide the world. Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, is my mother, and Jaffar, the one gifted with emerald wings, is my uncle. The Divine Scripture was sent down to our house and it contains injunctions and precepts for the guidance and prosperity of the world. We are a Divine shelter and refuge for the inhabitants of the earth, both in its external and internal meaning. We are the owners of the Fountain of Kouser and through obedience and devotion to us, people can expect the grant of cups, filled by the Prophet with the heavenly drink. It is an undisputed fact that the thirst of every virtuous being will be quenched by such cups to be presented by Ali. This Ali is a Divine Guide, whose obedience and the safeguarding of whose rights are compulsorily enjoined on the whole of humanity. Our friends are the greatest gainers and our enemies the worst losers on the 'Day of Resurrection.' 'The Tree of Thooba' will exclusively cast its shade on those that visit our grave. Their residence will be the Central Paradise, and they will own spotless bright souls."

Cavalry, infantry, archers and lancers, surrounded the helpless and lonely Imam from all sides. He had already despatched to hell numerous foes in single combats, and was now desperately killing right and left hordes of assailants. His sacred body was bleeding with countless wounds and yet the Lion of God wielded his sword most

effectively. Said one eye-witness: "I have never, before or after this incident, seen one wounded, alone, heart-broken with grief and bereaved of sons, relations and friends, making such a resolute dash with full presence of mind and charging the enemy with such courage and vehemence as Husain."

According to the report of Imam Zainul Abedeen, who was son of Imam Husain, that night, before his father was martyred, the Imam Husain was sitting, and his paternal aunt Zainab was looking after his illness. Then and there his father called his companions in the tent; there sat the slave of Abu Zar Ghaffari whose name was Huwi and who was sharpening his sword and Imam Husain was reciting the following verses, the translation of which runs as follows:—

"O Time! Woe to Thee! What an unfaithful friend thou art! In the morn and in the eve there are slaughtered many by Thy hands! O the Time does not give concession to anybody nor it takes any reward! Surely everything is in the hands of Allah! Every living man is walking on the path of death."

Imam Zainul Abedeen said that his father recited these three or four times and he understood his purport. His heart trembled and his eyes were full of tears, and he understood that the calamity could not be removed. His paternal aunt heard these verses and as the

women folk have no power of endurance, she became uncontrollable. She stood, ran without her shoes and nothing on her head. Her veil was hanging behind on the ground. She went to Imam Husain, cried and expressed her grief and said to him :—

“O my brother, the successor of the past and the cooling object of my eyes, and the token of the present living progeny of the Holy Prophet! I wished I would have been dead ere long.” He looked towards her and said: “My sister! Let • Satan not carry away thy endurance Surely the people of Heaven shall die and the people of the earth shall not remain alive and everything is perishable except His face. To Him the order returns and everything will return unto Him. Where is my father? Where is my grand-father, those that were better than me and in whom I find the best example? I make you swear that if I die, thou shalt not tear garments nor shalt thou scratch thy face.”

Wounded and bleeding all over, he dragged himself to the river bank for a cool drink. But before he could taste a drop of that precious liquid, his mouth was wounded by an arrow, and the water in his hands was full of blood. In distress, disgust and agony, he said: “Destiny has stopped my share of water in this world. I must wait until I get a cup of heavenly drink from my grandfather’s hands.” Says Ameer Ali: “Wounded and dying, he dragged himself to the river side for a last

drink; they turned him with arrows from there." "Gibbon writes: "Alone, weary, and wounded, he seated himself at the door of his tent. As he tasted a drop of water, he was pierced in the mouth with a dart; and his son and nephew, two beautiful youths were killed in his arms. He lifted his hands to Heaven—they were full of blood and he uttered a funeral prayer for the living and the dead."

When the Imam felt assured that he would soon succumb to death, he ultimately let himself lose and fell down from his horse. "Raising himself for one desperate charge, he threw himself among the Ummeyyads, who fell back on every side. But faint with loss of blood he soon sank to the ground, and then the murderous crew rushed upon the dying hero. They cut off his head, (he "was slain with three and thirty strokes of lances and swords") trampled on his body, and subjected it to every ignominy in the old spirit of *Hind. They carried the martyr's head to the castle of Kufa, and the inhuman Obaidullah struck it on the mouth with a cane. 'Alas!' exclaimed an aged Mussalman, 'on these lips have I seen the lips of the Apostle of God.'"

Then the world darkened. Storms rose high in saharas. Seas became rough and stormy and a cry was heard between the sky and earth:—"Surely Imam is killed at Karbala." "O the people

* 'Hind' was the name of the mother of Moaviya. In a battle against the Prophet, she chewed the liver of Hamsa who was the uncle of the Prophet.

of the world, know ye that the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad was ruthlessly and mercilessly killed like a goat or sheep at Karbala. Surely the curse be upon the oppressing people."

It will now be easy to understand, if not to sympathise with, the frenzy of sorrow and indignation to which the adherents of Ali and his children give vent on the recurrence of the anniversary of Husain's martyrdom. Husain and the other martyrs died to live for ever. Their martyrdom was for the holiest cause, to uphold the highest Islamic ideals. Yezid's unauthorized suzerainty represented in full and afresh Pre-Islamic Arabia of undiluted vices, and Islam that stood for virtue, truth, and righteousness, was threatened with annihilation wholesale. Husain's martyrdom, with his kith and kin, was the only sure, efficacious and infallible remedy, to root out the cankers of vices and irreligiousness, sapping the very foundation of Islamic commonwealth.

What with all the temporal, bribed power of Yezid, what with all the mighty hordes of mercenary soldiers, he was utterly defeated in his purpose, and was put to unmentionable shame and ignominy. A few handful of martyrs, hungry and thirsty, faced thousands, killed many and they could not but, at last, succumb overpowered by numbers. Thousands slaughtering a few, that cannot be called victory in any sense—"Success sways with the breath of Heaven." Those who fought and died most willingly and gladly in Allah's Cause, ultimately triumphed.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Last Phase.

The wicked tyrants of Yezid were not satisfied with the brutal murder of Imam Husain, the most horrible crime against the most innocent soul. That their malice, oppression, and hard heartedness, went further to the extremest limits, is proof positive and self-evident as to their motive being anything but political. The women of the Ahlul-Bait, who had already suffered unimaginable distress and agony along with their men and children, and who had sacrificed all of them in the holy Cause, bereft of tender ones, had to experience fresh calamities at the hands of the cursed callousness. But it must be said to their credit, pride, and glory, that they maintained to the last their dignity and womanhood, so much so, Yezid was put to shame for having dishonoured and distressed them, for having taken them as captives to Kufa in the most disgraceful way. He was compelled to see that they were escorted back to Medina in a manner befitting their status and position.

Having murdered Husain, those agents of tyranny hurried towards Husain's tents, where they carried on a shameless loot. Even the hoods of women were not spared, and what to say about their other apparels. The very skin, on which the surviving sickly Imam, Zain-ul-Abidin,

was lying, was not spared. Shimar, the murderer of Husain, would have killed, then and there, the sickly Imam, but for the intercession of Omar bin Saad. Then they set fire to the tents. What a confusion and consternation this sort of vandalism and barbarism must have created in the minds of those helpless ones, who feared they might be burnt alive, and who ran hither and thither, knowing not what to do! But the noble woman, Zainab, who so nobly sacrificed her two little sons for the sake of Husain, her brother, maintained that perfect presence of mind, and so was able to save the situation by bringing all together at a convenient open place. It was with great difficulty that she managed to bring under her safe custody the invalid Imam.

In that sad plight in the open field of Karbala, exposed in every sense and surrounded by those heartless tyrants, Husain's people spent two full nights, with none to soothe their bruised and burning hearts, though there were many to torment, tease, and insult them in all possible ways. Leaving the dead bodies of the martyrs as they were, without caring to bury them, but stripping them of the little things that were still on them, the enemy, on the third day, started for Kufa, taking with them the distressed family, who were mounted on camels. Those noble women of the Prophet's family were brought to Kufa with as much disgrace as possible. Writes an eye-witness :

"I was present in Kufa when the pillaged

family of Husain reached there. Imam Zain-ul-Abidin was seated on the back of a camel bound in chains. His thighs were bleeding and he was uttering,

“O cursed people! May not the Lord moisten your soil with showers! You have not paid any regard to our grandfather, the Prophet. What reply can you give, if we and the Prophet jointly question you on the Day of Reckoning? You carry us on camels without either litters or saddle cloth on them. You treat us like ordinary people, as if we are not the Founders of Religion. O Omiades! What does your silence mean at our distress and hardship? Why do you not reply to our cries? Out of joy, you clap your hands behind us, and you tease us on the way. May you be destroyed! Was not our grandfather, the Prophet, who saved the world from falling into the pit of ignorance?”

From Kufa, the heads of Karbala's martyrs and the Prophet's family were taken to Yezid's court at Damascus, as it was feared that the stirring speeches of the surviving Imam and those of Zainab and Umme Kulsoom would create a revolution against Yezid's government. Their very presence, so distressed and dishonoured, was quite enough to arouse popular indignation against the perpetrators of such heinous crimes. But at Damascus too, the distressed family was able to extract that legitimate sympathy from all. Yezid found his position too hot. Even his wife, sorely

feeling for the women of Husain's family, scolded him outright. Yezid tried to please the aggrieved members, with a show of special favours and regard. He even vainly tried to point out that he was not responsible for Husain's murder. He returned to the Ahlul-Bait the pillaged articles and also the heads of martyrs. He had already done his worst in the most deliberate manner, and all this show of repentance and politeness was of no use at all. Yezid was forced to admit his guilt. He could not stand the searching questions of Zainul-Abidin. What else is needed to show how the tyrant totally failed to achieve anything except ineffaceable ignominy and damnation? On the other hand success in its high moral sense, immortal fame and place, were all vouchsafed to the heroes of Karbala. There was a grand triumph of martyrdom.

With due honour, those noble ladies and the Imam were sent back to Medina, escorted by five hundred horsemen under Noman-bin-Basheer. Contrast their triumphant journey back to Medina, with their distressed and dishonoured position as captives, when they were taken from Karbala to Kufa, and thence to Damascus. This is another proof of the martyr's ultimate success. At Karbala the holy family spent a few days in deep mourning, after giving the due burials to the bodies of their martyrs. They left the cursed place for Medina. The Medinites, one and all, greeted the distressed members with violent mournings. For days, together, the whole of Medina presented a gloomy appearance.

Although the fierce and merciless followers of Yezid had killed Husain in his sheer helplessness, yet none of them could remain happy, as history tells us. With the exception of one or two all of them were killed, disgraced and tortured. Later on, the escaped ones also perished.

The wretch had tried to uproot the lineage of Fatima, but Allah has filled the earth with her descendants to-day. On the contrary, no one is present to-day, rightly descending from the slayers of Husain, and this fact reminds one of the words of the Holy Quran, which says: "And do not think Allah to be heedless of what the unjust do". (14-42).

"Islam consisteth in cherishing the profoundest respect for the Commandments of Allah and extending sympathy to His creatures."

—Mohammad.

"There is a polish for everything, and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of Allah."

—Mohammad.

"Verily there is a piece of flesh in the body of man, and when it is good the whole body is good; but when bad, the whole body is bad — and beware! it is the HEART."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER XIV.

Fore Knowledge About The Martyrdom.

Husain's martyrdom has got its own beauty, sublimity and peculiarity. For one thing, he entered into that life and death struggle with Yezid, fully prepared to meet the worst, and he was long beforehand aware of the inevitable marked out for him. Armed with such a previous knowledge, he did not avoid the great trial, he did not shrink from it, but was only awaiting it, so that he might carry out his bounden duty in Allah's Cause.

As a matter of fact, his martyrdom was a topic of common knowledge to the Prophet and his immediate people, Fatima, Ali and to many of the companions of the Prophet.

Ali relates what the Prophet had told him about Husain's martyrdom. The Prophet was informed by Gabriel that Husain would be slain at the Euphrates.

Ayesha says that the Prophet had told her that Husain would be slain beside a river.

Umme Salmah, the daughter of Saad, is said to have related that Gabriel came to her to inform

the Prophet of the ruthless slaughter of Husain on the Iraquian field by the inhabitants there from.

The son of Asakir says that Gabriel showed to the Prophet some earth of the slaughter-field of Husain.

Baghvi, the son of Saku, says that once the Prophet spoke that his Husain would be martyred on the field of Karbala in Iraq and that whosoever might be then present should take it to be their duty to obey and support Husain in every possible way.

In short, there are hundreds of such authentic reports that bear attestation to the fact that the tragic event of Husain was long before passed to the knowledge of his most beloved Prophet by the Almighty Allah.

Husain, having decided to leave Medina for Mecca, paid his parting visit to his grandfather's grave. Closing his eyes, he saw his grandfather in a vision, who spoke to him thus: "O Son! God desireth to see thee killed and thy ladies carried as captives in chains without veils on their faces. God hath reserved a lofty position for thee which thou alone can reach by the ladder of martyrdom."

On the day of leaving Medina, many ladies and prominent gentlemen approached Husain, and among those who wanted to dissuade him from his resolution, Abdulla, son of Abbas, spoke

to him thus: "I remember the prediction of your grandfather who told us that your journey to Iraq would cost you your life. Hence, I think it to be my duty to advise you to shun all ideas of leaving Medina."

When Husain approached Umme Salmah, a wife of the Prophet, to bid farewell to her, she said to him: "O Son! How can I be happy to bid you farewell, when I remember the prediction of your grandfather that you will be killed in Iraq", and Husain's characteristic and calm reply to her gives the high, divine purport behind his firm resolution from which, on no account could he go back. He replied: "Verily, I know the day and place of my murder and the person who would accomplish it. I am fully aware of the ultimate results of my journey. There is nothing that can alter the decree of God."

And just before mounting his horse, Husain uttered these words, pregnant with deep, divine philosophy: "Such is the world that the heads of Zacharias and John the Baptist, were sent as presents to the drunkards".

Husain was advised to consult the Holy Book, the Koran, regarding his leaving Medina for Mecca. Accordingly, he opened at random a page of the Book, and the very first verse that he read was thus: "Every individual ought to relish the taste of death."

On his way to Kufa, Husain happened to meet Farazduq, the famous poet of Arabia who

warned him concerning the untrustworthy nature of the Kufians and said: "The hearts of the Kufians love thee. Their tongues praise thee; but, when the time of test comes, their swords will be drawn against thy face to murder thee". To this, it was a highly sublime reply that the Imam gave, which was as follows: "You have stated the facts which I am fully aware of; God is Almighty and his powerful hand controls everything. But we praise Him both in prosperity and adversity. We are prepared to receive whatever comes from His hands."

Journeying further, Husain met another prominent person named Thirmah, from whom also he received grave warnings regarding the utter insecurity of his life at Kufa. He said: "Lest you should fall a prey to the mischief of the Kufians, I think it my duty to reveal facts to you. I assure you with a sworn statement that, if you enter Kufa, you will certainly lose your life. Nay, I think you will not be able to reach the borders, as arrangements have been made to meet you on the way and to be done with you. Hence, I advise you to change your direction and proceed to Yemen, where the fortification on the hill of 'Jahal-i-Ajan' will sufficiently protect you from your enemies". "By God ! it is such a stronghold that we have never yielded to our strongest foes as long as we had been there. During your stay there, my tribesmen will help you to the best of their means." In spite of these stern, clear facts revealed by Thirmah, Husain's reply to him was

only the confirmation of his original resolution and nothing could swerve or daunt him from his pledge to the Kufians. See his moving reply! "There has been an agreement between myself and the Kufians, that I should stay among them for their guidance in religious affairs. I think it beneath my dignity to break my pledges. If I successfully discharge my duty, I shall thank God: otherwise, I shall succeed in attaining martyrdom, God willing."

Husain, having reached Karbala, the place of his martyrdom, said: "This is our final destination, here will our young and old be slaughtered; here will our ladies be deprived of the head coverings and apparel; here will our friends come to visit our graves; all this was predicted to me by my grandfather and his words can never be false."

Thus, from the very beginning, long before his leaving Medina for Mecca, right up to the end, he was fully informed of the inevitable tragedy, and we see how he decided to pitch his tents at Karbala, prepared to face the coming tragedy. His messenger's sad fate at Kufa moved him deeply, no doubt, and he knew the worst was in store for himself and his family.

CHAPTER XV.

Husain's Solemn Determination.

We have to pause awhile to consider in detail about Husain's solemn determination and persistence to proceed to Kufa in accordance with his promise to the Kufians, prepared for the worst, fully knowing beforehand their hopelessly fickle and feeble nature and the adverse state of affairs there. Notwithstanding his sacred pledge, he would have been thoroughly justified in cancelling his intended programme at Kufa, in as much as he was able to obtain positive proofs as to the Kufians' unworthiness to receive his spiritual message and guidance. Ordinary human nature will surely consider it unwise and unsafe not to safeguard itself from such impending dangers. But Husain overlooked everything, cause, circumstances, knowledge beforehand, and the positive final result, when he had to fulfil the supreme task of God, namely, the task of spiritualising people.

Here is the classic example of complete and unquestioned submission to Divine will, and we have seen how Husain impressed this central and fundamental aspect of his martyrdom upon all those who tried their level best to dissuade him from the disastrous course. It is worth repeating his clear and firm statement. It runs thus: "I

should not like to be blamed by Allah for shrinking from the religious duty of training people to be godly and pious. If the Kufians prove disloyal and if I am killed in the discharge of my duty, my position will be much nearer God and they will be held responsible for their disloyalty and mischief."

Even when he left Medina for Mecca, he was not a little persuaded by many to stay there amidst them, one of them reminding him about the prediction of the Prophet regarding his fatal end in Iraq. His resolute reply to them was that he was prepared for the worst. Knowing fully well that death was decreed to him and his people, he was bent upon fulfilling the Divine decree.

On his way to Kufa, information after information were received by him as to the treacherous nature of the Kufians. Muslim's martyrdom, no doubt, moved him deeply. But the same iron determination was there. It was such a determined soul that we see at Karbala, with a handful of holy followers, equally determined to share with him death or even worse. His grim resolute spirit was transmitted into the hearts of all the martyrs, old and young, women and children. A mysterious mighty will-power, coupled with an unshakeable faith in God, can only explain the marvel of enduring the worst hardships: not a morsel of food and not a drop of water for three days on that desert plain of scorching heat.

Undiluted devotion to God strengthened their faith. Divine faith filled their souls with Divine

Spirit, and this Divine Spirit gave them that Divine Will Power. Solely nourished thus, they completely lost the ordinary cravings of flesh. A group of determined souls, armed with such a soul-force only, lived and fought against everything for three full days. And there was Husain, with that unexhaustic Divine Motor Power, radiating inspiration in all. That he was able to make the small band of martyrs equally determined like himself, ready to follow him unto death, partly explains why the martyrdom was such a grand success.

The gloomy, ominous spot, where Husain decided to camp, frightened much his sister, and she requested him to choose a more favourable place. "Destiny does not allow to go any further or to retrace our steps." See what a characteristically determined reply! Can complete and unhesitating submission to Divine decree go any further?

On that memorable night, the ninth of Muharram, every member of that holy band were strengthening their solemn resolve to die with deep prayers and devotion to Allah. The impending calamity, hunger and thirst, could not unnerve them at all. Every one was awaiting death willingly and eagerly. The iron spirit of the master permeated through and through. A sort of spiritual glow of joy was visible in every countenance. The approaching day of martyrdom was their bridal day, when they would be able to meet their Lord in Heaven. "Never may God

show us the day that we survive you." This was their solemn pledge to Husain. Every one was surcharged with his resolute spirit.

All his kith and kin, including the baby infant, were sacrificed for the Holy Cause. Husain was standing at the door of his tent, weary and alone, thirsting for a drop of water. What else is needed to unnerve a man? Even at that tragic hour, he did not lose his presence of mind. He was ready, prepared and firmly resolved to offer the greatest sacrifice. He was at the lowest ebb of adversity and distress, a complete picture of misery. Did he murmur, did he complain to God and say, "O Lord, why hast Thou forsaken me"? No, not at all. He was determined and glad to stand the worst trial. His prayer to Allah then was only his humble request to strengthen him further, so that he might boldly face the inevitable calamity. This was his prayer: "O Lord! My life is in distress and Thou art my helper in my troubles. My strength has given way and it is from Thee that I can gain strength. Thou art my Master and Bestower of all the blessings that I have enjoyed. Thou art the goal of my desires. Help me, O Thou Most Merciful! and let Thy help suffice me."

Hope, faith, optimism, presence of mind, self-control, self-abnegation, the high sense of social responsibility all these reached their Divine zenith in their unparalleled martyr, and his inexhaustible strength of will and character was fully transmitted to all his adherents. Distressed to the utmost, none despaired or felt dejected the

least. All were restless and anxious only to meet the destined and glorious end. That is why it is said that before this unprecedented martyrdom, headed by Husain, even Christ's sacrifice must surely pale into insignificance. We do not see the same sort of determined attitude and willing submission to His Supreme Will in Christ or his followers. When the hour of trial came, they showed the worst weakness. Instead of standing by their Master at the worst hour of calamity, entirely unnerved and like typical cowards they looked to their safety and deserted him. The Master himself lost his presence of mind and strength of will at their desertion. He became nervous and dejected and cried in despair to God, "Why hast Thou forsaken me"? Did Husain complain to God similarly, when he was left alone and helpless, deprived of those dearest and nearest to him? On the other hand exhibiting that rare Divine optimism, he prayed to Him only for further strength and inspiration, for, He is the God who confers the highest Bliss and relieves the worst distress: The Eternal Source of all inspiration and strength. And how nobly his followers acquitted themselves! They followed him unto the end. They showed the real meaning of followers. They did not falter or fall in the middle. Such a stern, unbending stuff could not but leave behind an immortal and glorious record of martyrdom. The heroes of Karbala stand apart in their unapproached and unapproachable grandeur.

There is the perverted determination on the

part of Yezid. He was resolved to wipe off completely the Prophet's holy people. His unholy and heartless resolve only all the more further strengthened Husain's and his people's worthy resolve. All his gigantic efforts came to no right; he destroyed himself by his dark determination to destroy God's people, and those good souls were crowned with eternal bliss.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Divine Decree.

We have dealt at length in a separate chapter how Husain had obtained, pretty long before the actual happening of the tragic event at Karbala, full knowledge about his inevitable martyrdom. Now that we are fairly acquainted, in all its phases, with the underlying deep purport of that sad event, and how it affected considerably the future history of Islam and humanity, we are able to perceive the subtle spiritual significance of His Divine decree. We realise how perfectly just and justifiable was His Divine purpose.

Islam, as we know, was threatened with wholesale annihilation by the Omiade ascendancy. Islam, the Prophet and his Ahlul-Bait, were only treated with supreme contempt and scorn. Pre-Islamic paganism and undiluted atheism began to assume an upper hand. The religion, that brought round the whole of Arabia under a common brotherhood and under the worship of The One God, with its attendant highly moral and cultural principles, was slowly pushed to the background, and Arabia was soon to be again in the firm grip of its original barbarism. The only sure and successful way to set aright this piteous state of affairs was by a practical demonstration of Islamic principles through the Ahlul-Bait; that is, to

show clearly of what stuff Islam and its staunch adherents were made. An indelible impression about this noble and pure religion must be implanted in the minds of people, before the dangerous poison of atheism could nullify all attempts in that direction.

Individual ideal lives, however influential, could not bring the desired effect. The best living exponents of Islam were helpless to stem aright the unfavourable tide. The individual martyrdoms of Ali, Hasan, and many others, had no serious effect. At Medina and at Mecca, the Prophet's grandson, Husain, was a towering personality, the most beloved of all. So far as he was amidst them, Islam was safe to some extent. Omiade tyranny wanted to do away with him also. If that calamity were to come to pass, Omiade irreligiousness would spread further. Husain knew all this. He was not prepared to sell his life cheap. He was not for silent, secret and indifferent personal martyrdom. That would only repeat the sad fate of his father and that of his brother. That sort of martyrdom was as futile as the previous ones. He should not give any chance to his enemy to murder him secretly. So, he left Medina for Mecca, when he saw the risk to his life through Yezid's agents. It would be nothing short of a crime on his part to remain in such a dangerous atmosphere. That would amount to committing suicide. Yezid's agents were equally alert at Mecca. Even Mecca and its Kaba promised no safety to his life. The irreligious tyrant cared not a jot for the sanctity

of the Kaba. He wanted to see the Imam murdered within its very precincts, and that too during the pilgrimage days. Better to leave Mecca immediately even without finishing the pilgrimage, rather than be responsible for the desecration of the holy place. Thus, Husain avoiding murder and silent martyrdom, abruptly left for Kufa.

In fact, he was not prepared to risk his life so cheap. He was not afraid of death at all, and no Hashimite was afraid of it. According to the Divine Decree, he was prepared for public martyrdom, along with his kith and kin. So, he started for Kufa with all his people, fully prepared for the glorious sacrifice. He, who could foresee the inevitable martyrdom, could also understand the wisdom of God who decreed it. No persuasion or dissuasion could alter his aim. Nor even the sad state of affairs at Kufa did in any way deter him from his resolute project.

Martyrdom, as decreed by God, was the only course left to him. Wherever he might be, Yezid would not spare him. It is better to die publicly, with all his kith and kin, suffering the worst, after showing to the world of what stern and sterling stuff the Ahlul-Bait were made, rather than yield to the tyrant. Here was one who, by birth or upbringing could put forward not even a shadow of claim to the Caliphate, but who somehow having usurped the position, which by right undoubtedly belonged to Husain, had the further audacity to extract allegiance from him. The

unlawful claimant, the usurper, demanding allegiance from the rightful claimant. That was simply monstrous, an unpardonable mockery, adding insult to injury. How could Husain, the most virtuous, think of yielding to the most debased specimen? He rightly preferred the martyrdom according to the Divine Decree.

Husain's individual and silent martyrdom, or his allegiance to an unworthy being, would have wholly spoiled the cause of Islam. Then it would have been a cheap triumph for Yezid and atheism, and soon Islam and the Ahlul-Bait would have been cast into the depths of oblivion. To avoid that tragedy, to save and re-establish Islam on a firm footing, and to root out Yezidic poison of paganism, to root out tyranny and wickedness, the Karbala tragedy was necessary. Husain saw how it was necessary and inevitable for a higher purpose. The fate of Islam, the fate of the Prophet's people, was trembling in the balance. One false step, a slight flattering or hesitation on the part of Husain, would have eternally undone the holy cause. Husain rose to the occasion, fully aware of the great responsibility imposed upon him by God. He offered the dearest and nearest kith and kin to save the dearest thing, Islam. Those holy heroes, one and all, equally rose to the occasion. They saved Islam and rooted out Yezidic poison. The wisdom of God's decree was fully justified.

CHAPTER XVII.

Out of Evil Cometh Good.

After Moawiah's death, if affairs in the Islamic world were to take their natural and right course, Imam Husain, perhaps, would have assumed the Caliphate. It is needless to mention that such an esteemed person, worthily adorning that august position, would have shed no small lustre and glory all around; and Islam would have gained not a little on account of his strict and righteous rule. But, after all, however glorious might be his reign, he would have soon surely gone the way of his father, Ali, or that of his brother, Hasan. So far as there were enemies like Yezid, he would have been done away with either by poison or by the assassin's sword, and Yezid and his followers with unquestioned authority would have wiped off Islam, the life-long work of the Prophet, and also the Ahlul-Bait. And then Arabia would have sunk back again to its pagan and atheistic days.

In fact, we know how Husain himself was fully aware of all these facts for, he had noted the sad end of his brother and his father, Ali, the one's voluntary retirement from the then uncongenial worldly surrounding and the other's strict adherence to Islamic principles, having proved completely futile. And ever since Yezid's assumption of the Caliphate, to remove without delay

and at any cost, whatever might be the consequences, the great obstacle, Imam Husain, from his way, was his foremost consideration. The Imam understood this. He left Medina for Mecca, but even the very holy precincts of the Kaba, where bloodshed is forbidden, did not prove a safe place for him. The tyrant's agents were instructed to fall upon him during the pilgrimage days. The wicked one had neither respect for the holiest spot Kaba, nor for the holy pilgrimage days, nor for that saintly personality. Husain thought it best to leave Mecca too for good, and he did not wish that he should be the cause for desecrating the holy place with foul murder. That was why he did not even wait to finish his pilgrimage.

Evil forces drove him from one place to another. We have seen how his journey to Kufa sadly terminated at Karbala. The inevitable tug-of-war between good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice, was to take place here. Man, in his worst aspect, was taking to the extreme, man, in his noblest nature. A few holy angels were surrounded by innumerable devils. Water was denied even to innocent and tender ones. What to say of three days' starvation and thirst on a desert plain under the scorching heat! Can wickedness and heartlessness go any further? And after all, did the wicked succeed? The more those good ones were tried in the ordeal of heart-rending afflictions and sufferings, the more brightly glowed their noble nature, fortitude, patience, self-control and faith unshakeable. Martyrdom raised them to the sublime heights,

and they won everlasting name and glory. Ultimately good was the result of all the evil designs of Yezid. Wickedness was disgraced and crushed. It was decreed by God that Islam should be regenerated and rejuvenated through Husain's unique martyrdom. Such a martyrdom alone would go deep into the hearts of men, showing practically that Islam stood for very high principles. The grand martyrdom gave a decided check to baseless materialism and the dangerously expending atheism. It was to turn the sweeping tide to the proper channel, that God decreed the martyrdom of Husain with his kith and kin. Everything happens for the best. Lasting good for humanity was the outcome of this marvellous martyrdom. Yezid's attempts were completely frustrated. His wickedness brought out the noblest nature in man. His wickedness brought about the martyrdom. The wicked were punished. The holy souls were immortalised.

Good actions and good thoughts are never lost. The actions of the good "smell sweet and blossom in the dust" Really out of the dust of Karbala, mixed up with the purest blood of those peerless martyrs, rose Islam, immortalised, revitalised and reborn, like a fresh blossom, wafting its holy fragrance beyond space and time. The best, the noblest, the sublimest these were forced to clash against the worst, the most worthless and wicked. Who succeeded, good or evil? The answer is evident. Evil forces became more hedious, ghastly and ghostly. And Good actions,

sublime thoughts and noble nature made resplendant manifold, were unshakeably enthroned in the hearts of millions. Husain's good martyrdom destroyed outright everything Yezidic and satanic. Wickedness, wishing to destroy good, wrought its own destruction, and Islam, with its Divine principles and ethics, came out triumphant.

"He is not of us who is not affectionate to his little ones, and doth not revere the old."

—Mohammad.

"A true Muslim is he who is strong (firm) in faith, wise but kind, true in belief, knowing and forbearing, mindful in ease, considerate in rights, temperate in wealth and contented in poverty, gentle in (using) power, regardful in friendship and patient in misery. Neither anger can vanquish him nor excitement can baffle him. Selfishness impels him not, abundance of wealth disgraces him not, and he becomes not mean for desire or greed. Always brave and steady he will run to rescue the oppressed and will be kind to the feeble. He is neither niggardly nor extravagant, forgives the faults and overlooks what the ignorant do; his own self suffers pain at his hands, but to the world he affords pleasure."

—Imam Hasan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Some Reflections Quoted.

“The story of Karbala will ring through the ages until the sun-set of time. Not until this planet cools will fervent souls cease to whisper the events of this memorable field. He, who had sat upon the knee of Muhammad, (May the choicest blessings of Allah be with him and those of his house!), whose baby lips had lisped the sacred tongue of the Final Revelation of Allah to humanity, who had grown like a sapling in the warmth of the sun of the Prophetic care, whose appearance brought a smile to the countenance of Allah's Apostle, he it was who was destined to cement Islam with his own warm life-blood. Shed your tears, ye Muslims, as ye tell your children the story of Husain, the Ever Blessed Saint and Martyr. Teach them to live as he did, and be prepared to die even as he. Muharram to those who have penetrated the inner veil, means much, and to the uninitiated, it also means a great deal. Let us then, learned and ignorant, gather together to pay our humble tribute to Husain, the Blessed, whose name liveth for evermore”.

“It has been rightly said that the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church.” The martyrdom of Husain which Yezid considered to

be an easy job and in which he easily succeeded, was not of momentary effect or fleeting consequences. It was full of meaning. It arrested the growth of the depravity which the depraved morals of the Omiades had introduced into Islam. It set the Islamic world to think, ponder, and consider furiously."

"The tragedy of Karbala has left its indelible marks on the course of human history. Its influence upon Muslim history and civilisation has been deep and far-reaching. The destruction of Omiade heresy and irreligion by the Abbasides and Fatimites, owed its inspiration to the tragedy of Karbala; the impetus for healthy reforms, and purer modes of life, which sprang up in Islam from time to time, came from the same source in fact, the deliverance of Islam from the thralldom of Heathenism and vice was due mainly to the influences which radiated from Karbala. Lastly, the Imams, who were the descendants of Husain and who earnestly cultivated religion and philosophy, made large contributions to Islamic culture, and it reacted powerfully upon the civilisation of mankind, both in the East and in the West. Truly, therefore, has the blood of the martyr cemented the bonds of cultural fellowship between man and man, an achievement, which is as rare, as it is glorious."

"There was no question of life and death, but the real issue was the attainment of the life-purpose. If the death of Husain had brought success to the aim of Yezid, the result must have

have been in his favour. If the murder of Husain would have meant the overthrow of Islam, we must have called Yezid, the Victor. But what we see? Husain is no more, but the fire he had lit is still burning with the same glow. He had defended Islam nobly, heroically and successfully. Yezid had done all to kill Husain and few others, but he could not kill the cause for which Husain stood. The real success was for Husain, for, he attained his ideal."

The tragedy of Karbala is the eternal tragedy of humanity, fighting and laying its life for an ideal, and it has all the glory and all the pathos of a Christ kissing the Cross, and a Socrates drinking the cup of poison.....Here are 72 bodies, fighting and dying like Homeric heroes for an ideal, a definite set of values, thus teaching, once for all, the true spiritual significance of sacrifice. They did not submit to evil meekly and tamely. They were too much of Men to do so. Hungry and thirsty, they sold their blood very dearly. They did not seek martyrdom for its own glorification. Their perspective was long. They sought it as a means to an End. They did not hug a shadow for reality.

"There is, of course, the physical suffering in martyrdom, and all sorrow and suffering claim our sympathy, the dearest, purest, most out-flowing sympathy that we can give. But there is a greater suffering than physical suffering. That is when a valiant soul seems to stand against the world; when the noblest motives are reviled and

mocked; when truth seems to suffer an eclipse. But truth, after all, can never die. That is perfectly true. Abstract truth, after all, can never die. It is independent of men's cognition. But the whole battle is for man's keeping hold of truth and righteousness. And that can only be done by the highest examples of man's conduct."

"It should be remembered that Husain fought for the traditions, institutions and ideals of the Prophet, (Peace be on his soul). The struggle, therefore, was really a struggle for the existence of the essential ingredients of the social efficiency. The operation of a basic principle of sociology was thus in evidence or, again, he fought for the preservation of the Islamic Spirit, which consists rather in the wholesome human conduct than in the numerical strength of the society. Therefore, it is not at all strange that, although Husain and his devoted followers perished in the struggle, the success was still theirs."

"We are almost at our wit's end when we are face to face with certain phenomena of Karbala, which appear to defy all attempts at explanation. The calamities which befell Husain and his companions were all of a serious kind. But one or two of them were of such a nature as would cause human blood to freeze. It cannot be even imagined how, for instance, they could bear the pangs of the extremest appetite and thirst, enduring continuously for three days in the intense heat of scorching sun. Nor were the

little infants immune from it."

"All the tragedies of the universe pale into insignificance by the side of the tragedy of Karbala, whose details of ruthless massacre spoliation and destruction, wrought by these hateful oppressors, would be incredible, were they not confirmed from so many different quarters. The unscrupulous perfidy of the invaders and their cold-blooded cruelty put gall into the festering wounds of humanity, and added insult to injury. These barbarous people, on account of their ruthless activities, left behind a legacy of hatred and abhorrence, and their surpassing cruelty made them the focus of full-throated condemnation. The disastrous issue was precipitated and accentuated by their greed, treachery and perfidy and irrespective of caste and religion, the whole world joins the chorus of hatred. Their religion was nothing but the greed of gold, their cult was nothing but sensual gratifications and carnal desires, their caste was nothing but the destruction of the high and noble ideals of humanity.

The tragedy of Karbala gave a rude shock to his (Yezid's) supreme sovereignty and a staggering blow to his undivided sway. It brought to light the act of usurpation, and the people who had been in darkness realised the real situation, and deemed the act of usurpation as a momental mockery. They had been misled that there was none in the family by the Prophet but the same usurper."

Had Husain not revolutionised the world by his martyrdom, had the inspiring story of the tragedy of Karbala not travelled all over the Muslim world, and had he not by his sacrifice filled a fresh blood in the veins of Islam, it would have never been found existing even in the present state in the world. It would have been extinct, then and there, and the opponents of Islam would have been successful in reviving their own old faith.

“Gave his head, but not hand in the hands of Yezid,

Verily, Husain is the foundation of Islam.”

“In fact, the tragedy of Husain is in one sense the tragedy of Yezid. It shows us a master of inequity, a thoroughly bad man, who is at last tempted to let loose the force of evil within him, and is wrecked altogether. The murder of Husain is, in fact, the destruction of Yezid; Islam is re-animated after every Karbala’.”

“Husain sacrificed his life, but did not surrender to Yezid. In truth, the basis of Islam is the personality of Husain.”

“For the sake of Truth, he has rolled up in dust and blod; thus he has laid the foundation of Islam.”

“From Husain we have learnt the secret of the Quran; we have lighted up the flames (of Life) from his fire.”

“Through the Karbala tragedy, the human spirit embarks on a voyage of adventure, acquires a new culture and serves a prime factor to lengthen the scroll of humanity’s triumphs.”

“In a distant age and climate, the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader.”

“The tragical fate of Husain and his children sent a thrill of horror through Islam; and the revulsion of feeling which it caused proved eventually the salvation of the faith. It arrested the current of depravity which flowed from the Ommeyyade Court of Damascus. It made the bulk of Muslims think of what the master had done, and of the injuries which the children of his enemies were inflicting on Islam”.

“Let every Muslim, and especially the Muslim youth, learn lessons of service and sacrifice from the Martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain in the field of Karbala, and endeavour their utmost to restore the glory and vitality of Islam to its origin in height, and thus make Islam be respected and followed as in the days of the past. What better homage can be paid to the Imam and other martyrs than imbibe the spirit of service and sacrifice! What source of inspiration can be better than that provided by the heroic deeds and sufferings borne by the martyrs on the field of Karbala! What indeed can be greater and more glorious than that of endeavouring for the greatness of Islam, and also of rendering service to country

and humanity, which Islam very strongly and emphatically preaches !”

“No person can describe with full justice the deeds of seventy-two brave heroes against a twenty-thousand of the enemy. No brain can imagine the least of the tortures that these may have suffered. All combatants could be surrounded by the enemy from four sides, but these had the enemy on eight sides, the scorching sun above, the burning sand below, and hunger and thirst within.”

“Hell is veiled in delights, and Heaven in hardships and miseries.”

—*Mohammad.*

“No misfortune or trial befallerh a person but on account of his own faults; and most of these shall God forgive.”

—*Mohammad.*

“Withhold your hands from striking and from taking that which is unlawful and bad.”

—*Mohammad.*

“The best of God’s obedient elect are those who, when seen, remind of God; and the worst of people are the tale-bearers, those who do mischief and separate friends, and **SEEK FOR THE DEFECTS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.**”

—*Mohammad.*

CHAPTER XIX.

Islam and Martyrdom.

Husain's martyrdom gave a new birth and life to Islam and its culture. The world was thus saved from a heavy loss. But this grand martyrdom, which rebuilt afresh God's religion, naturally must remind us that the very birth and growth of this faith, during the life of the Holy Prophet, (Peace of Allah be ever upon him) was through martyrdom. Many of the Prophet's followers at the beginning were ordinary people, mere slaves. For accepting the worship of one God, and for no other crime, these humble followers were forced to lie on the burning sand, and their chests were choked and broken with heavy stones. They were mercilessly flogged, until blood came out profusely. Though thus bruised, broken and bled, they did not give up the Prophet's and Allah's cause, but died, gladly suffering untold tortures and praising Him till the last moment. But for such faithful followers, the infant faith of the Prophet would have been strangled to death.

Gradually, the Prophet was able to attract adherents to his creed from the higher class. Many members from noble families joined him. Noble or otherwise none were spared from tortures. The father used to flog his own son without the least mercy, if the latter happened to be on the

side of the Prophet. It was a heart-rending sight for the Apostle to see his faithful people so callously treated. To save them and the infant faith, he advised them to migrate to Abyssinia and other neighbouring places.

Mecca became too hot for the Prophet. All attempts to make him renounce his new faith having proved futile his enemies wanted to put an end to him by the sword, for, his new religion was causing such a disturbance. To save Islam and himself, he fled from Mecca to Medina. There also the enemies pursued him. In the battles that he fought to defend Islam many of his followers were killed. Ever since he propounded his faith, he had known no peace of mind. His whole life was a sacrifice in the Cause of Allah. At last, his efforts were crowned with success. He returned to Mecca triumphant. Mecca, without a murmur, welcomed him and his faith. It was the willing martyrdom of many that brought about the final success. These martyrs were the pillars of Islam.

Sacrifice has built up Islam. The marvellous life and career of the Holy Prophet was itself a complete surrender and sacrifice in His Cause. Even at the height of his power, when he could command anything and everything, he led the simplest and the most abstemious life. Sacrifice is the very essence of Islam. One should sacrifice for the sake of the higher life, time, money, comforts, etc. Islamic prayers, fasting, poor-rate

and pilgrimages, teach these various types of sacrifice.

The great edifice of Islam, so built up and cemented by the holy blood of many martyrs, and breathing the very spirit of that master-mind, was threatened with down-right destruction after the demise of such a great personality. With Yezid's ascendancy to power the position of Islam and that of the Prophet's people reached a delicate stage. Irreligious and immoral to the very core, the tyrant had neither respect for God, nor for the Quran, nor for the best interpreters of that Holy Book, and the Ahlul-Bait. He wanted to make a clean sweep of everything. To yield to him was highly suicidal. So, Husain and his people were driven to the only course, martyrdom, wisely decreed by God, to save the honour of Islam and that of the Prophet's house, and to destroy and punish the wicked. Islam, built up by the martyrdom, was firmly re-established in all its glory by the grandest martyrdom. Islam was having a transitional, trying stage during the days of the Omiades. Husain's martyrdom perfected and purified it thoroughly. It had its final purification in the blood of Karbala's martyrs.

It would seem the Holy Prophet was miraculously exempted from martyrdom. This was also undoubtedly Allah's Will. His Divine hand saved him from all attempts at murdering him. On the night of his fleeing from Mecca to Medina, his enemies, with swords in hands, had

surrounded his house, resolved to fall upon him when he would be coming out to go to the mosque for the early morning prayer. Asking Ali, his son-in-law, to take his place in his bed, he made his narrow escape, rushing past the very enemies there. God threw dust in their eyes, and they could not, therefore, see the Prophet escaping their very eyes. Due to his presence of mind and due to Allah's aid, Ali also made good his escape from the angry clutches of the enemies. The Prophet, hiding in the cave with his ally, Abu Bakr, had a narrow escape from there too. God was with them, and one of the foes desperately hunting out for him, and having almost rightly scented the very spot of their refuge, somehow left them, without pushing on the search a little more.

At Medina, many attempts were made at his life, and a Jewish woman actually poisoned him, which by the grace of Allah, did not prove fatal. In the many wars he fought against the Meccans, he escaped murder, though many of his staunch adherents, ever alert to protect his precious life, were killed one after another. After seeing with his own eyes, the full fruition of his life-long work in the Cause of Allah, he had a natural and peaceful end at a ripe old age.

Martyrdom would have then marred the dignity of his Prophet-hood, and Islam's up-hill work would have suffered much, if martyrdom fell on him. *Strenuous* and *continuous* was the task of the Apostle in building up the grand edifice of

Islam. He had to work at it throughout his life, till the very last moment. Martyrdom would have considerably upset God's programme that was to be carried out through His Apostle. Afterwards due to the adverse state of affairs, Arabia needed a very severe lesson to bring her round once more to Islamic ways. Islam needed further perfection and purification, so that it might be installed afresh permanently and firmly. Hence, there came the Supreme necessity for Husain's matchless martyrdom.

"Whosoever eateth of lawful food and observeth my laws, and mankind is in safety from him, he shall enter into Paradise."

—Mohammad.

"A Muslim who mixes with others and shares their burdens is better than one who lives a life of seclusion and contemplation."

—Mohammad.

"The greatest enemies of God are those who profess Islam and do acts of infidelity, and who, without cause, shed man's blood."

—Mohammad.

"Charity is a duty unto every Muslim. He who hath not means thereto, let him do a good act or abstain from an evil one; that is his charity."

—Mohammad.

CHAPTER XX.

Islam Versus Paganism.

The Meccans, headed by Abu Sufyan, the arch-enemy of Islam and the high-priest of Paganism, fought their utmost against Islam and its founder. Notwithstanding their herculean efforts, the religion of God scored ultimately a decided success. Yet, the dangerous element, feeble and foiled, was still lurking and living. It had not received the crushing death blow.

So, after the Prophet's demise, the serpent again began to raise its head aloft. The time-honoured Omiade animosity to Islam, started by Abu Sufyan, was naturally handed down to his son, Moawiah. With all his treachery and irreligiousness, Moawiah put on at last a show of respect for Islam and the Prophet's people. But his son, Yezid, proved to be a devil incarnate, out and out. He was the worst product of the Omiades; Abu Sufyan, Moawiah, and a host of others of that type, were rolled up into one in him. During his Caliphate, Paganism and Omiade animosity reached their most tragic climax. Yezid the Caliph: What an irony! Can mockery of religion go any further?

“It is no denying the fact that Yezid was a custodian of vices, an embodiment of perfidy,

and an incarnation of treachery and diplomacy. Wine and women summed up his whole life, and in fact, he was a devil incarnate. His domination awfully changed the ethical atmosphere and dark clouds began to gather on the moral horizon. His noxious activities badly affected the character of the masses of Arabia, and a curtain was dropped on the sound activities of the people. Arabia presented a very ugly picture, full of darkness and forebodings. Morality became a history of the past, debauchery was in full swing, and dishonest dealings ate into the very vitals of Arabia the home of the Prophet and the nursery of Islamic activities....Yezid wanted to give a practical shape to his malicious designs and re-terminate the whole family of the Prophet which was an eye-sore to him.

Following the wise counsel of the Prophet and the inward voice of God, Ali, Hasan and Husain kept aloof and quiet from the chaotic state of affairs, so that the situation may not be made worse. Knowing fully well how their rightful and unquestionable claims to the Caliphate were deliberately overlooked, they thought it premature and even inadvisable to launch into any serious crusade against the prevailing injustice and irreligiousness, for, that way, they might bring eternal harm to themselves and the dearest thing, Islam. They were satisfied with doing their humble bit for Islam in a silent and patient manner, without worrying themselves about their rightful claim to the Caliphs, and they who saved Osman from popular indignation. Caliphate

was thrust upon Ali, he was dragged into wars, and finally he was assassinated. Hasan's preference of complete retirement and aloofness to the Caliphate, was of no avail for he was done away with poison. Many innocent souls were thus, by poison or sword, silently removed from the path. Hearing the death of Hasan, it is said that Moawiah exclaimed: 'Allaho-Akbar'. Husain strongly protested against this wicked attitude of Moawiah. He clearly saw the growing menace to Islam and its immediate supporters at the hands of paganism and Omiade hatred. With Yezid's ascendancy to power, affairs grew worse, as we have noted.

Enough harm had already been done to Islam. Passive and noble noninterference and non-resistance could not solve the problem. Husain must act, and must assert. Islam must rise to its full height and must assert its spirituality and vitality. Yezid with his dark paganism, was out to annihilate Islam and the whole family of the Prophet. He, the usurper demanded from the rightful claimant, Husain, immediate and unconditional allegiance to him. That is a great insult not only to him, but to Islam itself. Paganism was trying to have an upperhand over the religion of God. Further hesitation and delay would bring eternal ruin to his family and religion. Here was the tyrant's challenge to Islam. The challenge must be answered. Husain was not prepared to bow down before the devil and his paganism. He was prepared to face the worst consequence. But if he

had remained at Medina, and afterwards, even at Mecca, following the persuasion of his well-wishers; if he had not abruptly, without completing the pilgrimage, started for Kufa, with all his kith and kin, his grand plan would have been thoroughly upset; for the tyrant would have succeeded in seeing that he was murdered in the usual, silent way.

The canker and poison of Paganism, sapping the very life-blood of Arabia, would have effaced Islam from the face of the earth, but for Husain's martyrdom. The impending catastrophe struck deep and to the quick in Husain's heart. He placed his all, seventy-two precious souls at the altar of Truth and Righteousness. Paganism, trying to kill Islam, was itself given, at last, the well-merited fatal blow. The heroic deaths of the martyrs tolled the death-knell of Paganism, but gave a new birth and beauty to the religion of God.

"Guard yourself from six things, and I am your security for Paradise: When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; be chaste in thought and action; withhold your hand from striking, and from taking that which is unlawful and bad."

—*Mohammad.*

"He that helpeth out his brother will be helped out by God, and he that refraineth from exposing his brother will be rewarded by God concealing his faults."

—*Mohammad.*

CHAPTER XXI.

The Philosophy of Suffering.

The Karbala tragedy has given the best solution and answer to the most intricate problem in life. Why do the good and innocent invariably suffer in life? Why was Husain and his people, with all their boundless devotion to God, subjected to inconcievable sufferings that reached their culminating point in their cold-blooded murders by callous tyrants? Had they not the best right to enjoy the wholesome pleasures of life? The direct answer is, that they had to suffer the worst and sacrifice the most, so that the worthiest ideal and Allah's Cause, Islam, the dearest thing in life, may be saved for ever from the foul and fatal clutches of the Devil. To realise this supreme purpose, inevitable were those sufferings and martyrdoms, as wisely pointed out in the Divine Decree.

And certainly, the law of compensation must work. The good ones, having suffered the worst for the holiest cause, were awarded with Eternal Bliss in Paradise. The Prophet was there with the heavenly cup to quench their thirst for ever. Said Husain to his supporters: "Lift up your eyes and behold! The doors of Paradise are open for

* (*From the Muharram Number, The Muslim Review. Lucknow. April 1935*). Article contributed by the author of this book.

you. Its palaces have been tastefully decorated. My friends who have just perished, are in the company of the Holy Prophet and my father Ali. These and the angels are restlessly waiting to receive you." Even such of those who have not the patience to believe in this sort of glorious life after death for such good and suffering souls, can at least believe the actual, far reaching results of the glorious martyrdom as recorded in history. Even that way, we see how the martyrs have earned eternal glory and fame in this world for their worthy and willing sacrifice. As the saviours of Islam, they will be remembered till the end of time. In their memory, thousands of Muharram celebrations have taken place in the past and still thousands and thousands of such celebrations are in store. By their sufferings, they have brought lasting honour to the Prophet, his family, and his religion.

Look at the Prophet's life! It is nothing but a series of sufferings, hardships, and trials, cheerfully and willingly borne in the cause of Allah. Did not the enemies tempt him strongly with all the worldly pleasures? And even when a time came when he could command anything, did he not choose to lead the humblest life, typically of a self-denying nature? High life-purposes and ideals cannot be achieved without suffering. The higher the ideal, the severer the struggle. Only the good ones, who can alone realise the ultimate goal, can be the chosen ones of God for such purposes, and He surely knows how to reward them in the best

way. The path of true greatness is not paved with ease and pleasure. Neither the Prophet, nor his worthy adherents, Husain and his immortal band, ever dreamt of selling their too precious souls to the Devil. The tinsels and toys of life, its worthless transitory pleasures, could not move them a bit. What is the use of gaining the whole world by losing one's own soul? That was their sublime attitude towards life. People with such high conscience in them, following the voice of God, embrace all hardships willingly. In the attainment of the higher life, all sufferings are its golden steps.

Husain's martyrdom has solved for us the acute problems of life. He and his martyrs are a perennial source of inspiration and never-failing consolation. Compared to those martyrs' ordeals and distress, our petty difficulties and calamities ought to dwindle into insignificance. They have considerably mitigated our sufferings, clearing the thorny path not a little. Such soothing lessons and thoughts about their sacred sacrifices ought to go deep into our hearts. Let us try to cultivate in our humble way, those virtues of patience, fortitude, self-control, and that firm faith in Him, which is the result of our complete surrender to His Supreme Will.

In fact, peace and a healthy harmony in life, despite taxing calamities, can only be evolved from the fundamental belief that Allah sees, regulates and controls everything. The foremost Islamic attributes of God, "The Beneficent, The Merciful,"

have the deepest significance behind them. His guiding Hand takes us safe through the darkest alleys of life. What was it that so marvellously sustained those holy band at Karbala? Verily, the Spirit of God, undiluted devotion and faith in Him. What a solemn serenity, what a spiritual Bliss, pervaded in that holy camp on that memorable night, though surrounded by the beastly besiegers all around, making a hell of noise, a regular pandemonium! What a sharp contrast, and what a great lesson to us! Notwithstanding three days' hunger and thirst, how courageously and calmly they faced the foes and the inevitable end!

Life is a mysterious mixture of pleasure and pain. Sufferings and sorrows are the bodyguards of happiness. Let us take calmly and meekly and in good faith, all trials and tribulations, facing them manly, supported by the never-failing faith in Him. Islam's attitude towards life is bold and broad, practical and ideal. It does not advocate renunciation, asceticism and monasticism; for such systematised institutions go against the very nature of man. But then, it has not failed to embody in its codes the laudable spirit underlying these institutions. According to Islamic principles and practices, one living in the very midst of the worldly surroundings, can at the same time be in a state of complete detachment. One can work out the higher purpose of life, and can lead the most virtuous life, if he follows those golden rules of conduct. Islamic prayers, fastings, almsgiving, and pilgrimages, inculcate in a true

Muslim the spirit of self-sacrifice and self-denial. His life is a series of sacrifices towards the higher life, and no amount of sacrifice is too much for him in the Cause of Allah. The ideal life of the Prophet and that of his grandson, Husain, are perfect and true mirrors of Quranic teachings. Struggling and persevering in the very midst of worldly surroundings, they upheld the cause of Truth and Righteousness against wickedness and vice, boldly facing all hardships. Did not Islamic optimism reach its sublime heights in those martyrs of Karbala, when they so courageously and calmly welcomed the inevitable?

Islam's view of death is equally characteristic. It teaches one how to face death peacefully and without fear. Death lays its icy hand on all. It is a phenomenon, natural and inevitable. All created things must return to their original source. "From Him we came, and to Him we return." See how Karbala's martyrs teach us how to face this inevitable end! Says Husain, consoling Zainab thus: "Death is decreed for all; those in Heaven as well as those on earth must one day suffer death; it is only God that is immortal; it is He alone that commandeth and to Him shall everything return. My father and grandfather were better than me and yet died and every Moslem has to follow their footsteps." Indeed, those martyrs awaited the impending doom with a peculiar, spiritual thrill. "As the time of their returning to the Creator was approaching fast, their restlessness in expectation of the particular

hour developed with incalculable speed. Instead of the worldly bread and water that were denied to them, they nourished their souls with tears and prayers, and their devoted prayers and supplication guided and landed them just at the fountain of life. They were waiting for their decreed time to plunge into the fountain, to be drowned in it, and be metamorphosed into eternal life." "Do you think to terrify me with death?" was the undaunted challenging interrogation from Husain to Yezid's lieutenant, when he was threatened with the worst consequence, in case of his non-submission to the tyrant. Even a child of the Hashimite family was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of fearlessness. Did not the Imam's nephew, only eleven years old, tell his uncle that he liked death "sweeter than honey?"

Islam does not preclude any one from enjoying the good things of life, while it rightly denounces all vices, drinking, gambling, debauchery, etc., the enemies that block the path to a higher, virtuous life. It does not advocate the gloomy, Calvinistic, or Buddhist view of life, nor does it agree with the Hindu philosophy that preaches about the unreality of everything. Life is real, life is earnest; it is worth struggling to lead a good life. Of course, there is a better world, where the good and suffering live in Eternal Bliss. This is what Islam teaches.

We see how the wicked ones, the heartless murderers of Husain and his people, were most ruthlessly dealt with. The mill-stone of God

grinds slow, but sure. 'Murder will be out' is a common expression, and it is our common experience that the wicked cannot escape punishment in the long run.

Through suffering, Virtue and Islam triumphed for ever, and wickedness was punished by its own dark and overwhelming forces: "Let the troubled and care-worn world look to Husain for consolation in misfortunes and redemption from sins. Accept love, and make Husain your life's ideal, for, he has deprived, for you, the world's misfortunes, of its poignancy. However adverse may be the circumstances Husain will keep your mind, cool and calm. He will give you courage to laugh at your sorrows. Following whatever creed, faith, or religion you like best, you can, however, make Husain your ideal consoler, at least when you are passing through any ordeal.

Sufferings have glorified and beautified life, physically, intellectually, mentally, and spiritually. Nay, they have beautified the whole world. Out of the tears of Shah Jahan, rose that marble, Taj. The deepest thoughts have welled up from saddest events. To make life better, Christ and Buddha embraced a life of suffering. But for Husain, the prince of martyrs, human culture and civilization would have sustained an irreparable loss. Eternal glory to Karbala's martyrs! May Allah's choicest blessings be ever with them!

CHAPTER XXII.

Conclusion.

Centuries have passed and prodigious and momentous events have taken place in world's history during these long intervals. Nations after nations rose and fell. Mighty royalties, with all their temporal dignity and grace, came into existence and then became extinct. Many a sceptre and crown thus tumbled down, passing into the region of complete oblivion. Many a black chapter of history chronicles but disgusting and distressing wars and feuds, marring and barring man's real progress towards the higher ideal. And in the name of religion and State, tons of precious human blood was spilt. Man, considered the noblest of Allah's creations has not hesitated to commit the most heinous and hedious crimes, filling this earth, a charming paradise, with his oppression, descension, hatred, and what not? The sun, the standing witness of all ages, and the stars, the beaming beacons of dark nights, have been the solemn and silent spectators of all these tragic dramas enacted by mankind. Ah! What all kinds of outrageous deeds, exhibiting the beast in man in its worst aspect, have darkened those numerous pages of history! How many of His humble followers were forced to become a prey to the relentless and bloody sabre of oppression and tyranny! How many such innocent were hanged

or put to death, after subjecting them to prolonged and taxing tortures! If a fresh enquiry is held into all such perpetrations of the past, every inch of the sky above shall bear witness to this effect, and every particle of the earth's surface shall appear to be weeping over the helplessness of human being. All these have happened, and will ever be happening – manifestation of man's sheer helplessness on one side, and the exhibition of his heartless and ferocity on the other. This sort of helplessness on one side and heartlessness on the other, reached their typical climax at Karbala. The heart – freezing tragedy that was enacted on the bank of the Euphrates is a long tale of blood without a precedence in world's history.

My God! that barren desert of Karbala, with the scorching and choking heat of the sun's rays! On one head, all false forces of oppression, cruelty, and beastly tyranny were concentrated and personified in Yezid. Husain and his small band of holy followers represented in the best form those virtues of love, self – sacrifice, fortitude, and complete submission to Divine Will. Blind vanity and base and baseless autocracy sternly demanded that Truth and Righteousness should stoop down to wicked material might and power. Tyranny, backed by sheer material power and resources, tried its utmost to strangle to death the Divine spirit and Virtues in man, trifling with religion and God, and setting at nought those high ethical principles. Unwarranted and self-imposed authority, with its might and wickedness, wanted to reign Supreme. Vice and wickedness, with its

numerous adherents, wanted to overpower the small band of God's people who stood by virtue and righteousness through thick and thin. It was a life and death struggle for Husain and his party. Only death and martyrdom could yield victory and lasting glory. There was no question of hesitation or yielding. Every head that was lifted in supporting Right, could find no way to bend before tyranny and oppression; it may be smashed or beheaded, and it was ever ready for that sort of bold sacrifice. That neck, through which a voice for freedom and true democracy was raised, was restless and anxious to quench its three days' thirst with its own holy blood, flowing from the sabre of undiluted oppression. And that hand, which raised the standard of Truth, on behalf of the oppressed and innocent, could never go into the unholy hands of the oppressor for an abject pledge of slavish obedience. It was nothing short of selling one's own soul and conscience to the Devil. Many yielded to the irresistible temptation, but Husain and his people—never, never. The invincible and immortal spirit decidedly triumphed over the so-called might of materialism and rank atheism. Islam was placed thenceforth on an unshakeable foundation. We can now very well understand why Husain's unique martyrdom was something unavoidable and inevitable, decreed by Divine Will. Eternal glory be to God's martyrs! The cry of "Ya Husain" has rung through ages, and will undoubtedly ring through ages to come, Truly, "there is not a single celebration so grand and

appealing as the commemoration of Husain's martyrdom ”.

We always see the hearts of the world of Islam throughout becoming dejected and melancholy during the first ten days of the month of Moharrum. And everywhere, in commemoration of the martyrdom of this faithful leader, millions shed tears in accompaniment with lamentations and recitations of elegies, thus exhibiting universal annual condolence and displaying their genuine sympathy towards the unequalled afflictions of the Hero of Karbala. But how many hearts are there, in fact, which having learnt again and again this saddest tale of harrowing horrors, feel moved to their very depths, and how many eyes are there, whose tears on such occasions have flown deep into innermost recesses of the mourners' hearts, cleanly washing all impurities? This is real mourning, the deep purport and purpose of that grand martyrdom.

Brethren - in - Islam ! Are not right and wrong still at war with each other, despite the boasted evolution of men towards a higher civilisation and culture ? And the millennium of a world peace does not seem to have ever a tolerable chance some where in the near future. The beast and the devil in man are still pre-dominant, and there are any number of Yezids and Shimars. But the darkest cloud has its silver lining. God's good earth will always have a good share of his holy persons to guide mankind through the right

path. One Husain was enough to illuminate the whole world, and he is still spreading light, life and culture everywhere. He resisted evil, wickedness, autocracy and rank irreligiousness with an iron will, sacrificed his sacred life, to uphold Virtue, but never surrendered to Yezid, the devil incarnate. Let us similarly as true Muslims, try to imbibe that immortal spiritual strength from that matchless martyr, endeavouring our level best to resist evil, even at a heavy sacrifice of our lives. According to Islamic principles of conduct, to be indifferent, neutral, or passive, is in itself a crime. Islam, the religion of peace is a vital religion, and so does not advocate that sort of lifeless peace through non-resistance. While it rightly denounces aggression, true to its fundamental principle of peace, it cannot allow evil and wickedness to roam at large. So, let us all uphold Virtue by sternly resisting evil. This is the true and ultimate way to peace. Islam stands for this sort of peace. Husain' life is a thoroughly practical demonstration of such sound principles of conduct. Let us all humbly try to faithfully follow his ideal guide. This is the best way to remember his martyrdom, the very best way to pay our humble homage to our peerless Saint. Husain! Thou conqueror of million hearts! May the choicest blessings of Allah be ever upon you! Pray guide us through the darkest calamities!

"He shall enter into the Garden of Bliss that hath a true, pure, and merciful heart."

—*Mohammad.*

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